

***San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles
Rivers and Mountains Conservancy***

OPEN SPACE PLAN, PHASE II

FINAL REPORT

June 2002

Prepared by:

EIP Associates
MWH
Arthur Golding and Associates
Calvin R. Abe and Associates
TreePeople
FORMA Systems

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. APPROVAL OF <i>COMMON GROUND</i>	3
A. Cities	3
B. Board of Supervisors	3
C. Water Entities.....	3
3. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.....	5
A. Cities	5
B. RMC Brochure.....	5
C. Project Development Workshop	8
D. Project identification form	9
E. GIS Consortium.....	12
4. EXPANSION OF <i>COMMON GROUND</i>	13
A. Addenda	13
1. Northern Slope of the San Gabriel Mountains	13
2. Water	14
B. City-Specific Appendices	15
5. RMC TOOLS	19
A. Project Evaluation Software	19
B. GIS Database.....	21
6. WORKING GROUP.....	29
A. Charge.....	29
B. Membership	30
C. Schedule and Structure	32
D. Subcommittees	33
1. Rivers, Tributaries, Corridors and Parkways	33
2. Project Technical Assistance/ Education and Outreach.....	36
3. Duck Farm.....	37
4. Habitat	38
5. Mountains, Hills, and Foothills.....	39
E. Recommendations	40
1. Open Space Management.....	41
2. Duck Farm.....	48
3. Education and Outreach	51
4. River-Related Projects	56
5. Mountains, Hills, and Foothills.....	61
6. Long-Term Funding.....	62
7. Habitat.....	66
7. SCOPE OF SUBSEQUENT PLANS.....	69
A. River Parkways and Tributaries.....	69
B. Habitat	79
C. Mountains, Hills, and Foothills	90
D. Trails And Bike Paths	103
E. Cultural Landscapes.....	104
F. Monitoring and Assessment	104
CITY-SPECIFIC APPENDICES	107

TABLES

Projects in the Project Tracking and Evaluation System	20
Parkway and Open Space Plan Working Group Revised Action Plan (4/12/02).....	33
Prioritize River Related Projects During Next Three Years	35
Open Space (Acquisition, Ownership, Planning, Development, and) Management Models	44
San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Education Framework.....	54

APPENDICES (Separate Volumes)

1. Working Group
 - A. Member Roster
 - B. Agenda, background materials and minutes
 - C. Subcommittee agendas, background materials and minutes
 1. Rivers, Tributaries, Corridors and Parkways
 2. Project Technical Assistance/ Education and Outreach
 3. Duck Farm
 4. Habitat
 5. Mountains, Hills and Foothills
2. Subsequent Plans
(Supporting materials)
3. Project Development Workshop
 - A. Invitation List
 - B. Agenda materials
 - C. Copy of PowerPoint Presentations
 - D. List of Attendees
3. Project Development Workshop
Supporting materials supplied by Cities
4. GIS Consortium
Agendas, list of participants, background materials and minutes
5. Common Ground Approval
Final version of tracking spreadsheet
6. Project Evaluation Software
Documentation
7. Monthly Status Reports

1. INTRODUCTION

With assistance from the California Resources Agency, the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, or Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), in conjunction with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), jointly developed a Watershed and Open Space Plan for the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers entitled *Common Ground*, from the Mountains to the Sea. The RMC and SMMC adopted the Watershed and Open Space Plan at a joint meeting on October 17, 2001.

As part of Phase II of the Open Space Plan process, the RMC retained a consultant team of EIP Associates, Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH), Arthur Golding and Associates, TreePeople, and FORMA Systems, in addition to Calvin R. Abe and Associates, to (1) support and facilitate meetings of a Working Group to advise the RMC on issues raised in *Common Ground*; (2) clarify and expand the scope of the subsequent plans proposed in *Common Ground*; (3) expand outreach to cities, agencies, nonprofit groups and community-based organizations; (4) track approval of *Common Ground* by cities, the Board of Supervisors and certain water entities; (5) augment or clarify information in *Common Ground* and extend the Plan to those portions of the RMC territory outside of the watersheds of the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers; and (6) provide the RMC with project evaluation software and enhance the RMC's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database developed during Phase I.

This document is the Final Report of the Phase II activities described above. Detailed back-up materials (including agendas, minutes and background papers for the Working Group) are provided in a separate appendix to this report.

2. APPROVAL OF COMMON GROUND

Public Resources Code Section 32504(d) of RMC's enabling legislation specifies that the RMC must:

Prepare a San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Parkway and Open Space Plan to be approved by a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population, the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County, and by the Central Basin Water Association and the San Gabriel Valley Watermaster.

Phase II of the Open Space Plan included tracking approval of the approval of the Plan by this various entities, as described below.

A. CITIES

To assist the RMC in tracking approval of Common Ground by cities, the consultant team developed an Excel spreadsheet with contact information for each city. RMC staff used the spreadsheet to keep track of which cities had received the plan, had been contacted regarding approval, and which had approved the plan. As each city approved the plan, the spreadsheet tallied the number of cities that had approved the plan, and the total population of those cities, to determine when the RMC had received approval from both a majority of the cities, and a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population (based on 2000 census data). For an overview of outreach efforts related to Common Ground approval, refer to section V.A of this report.

As of June 1, 2001, 54 cities (of the 68 cities in the RMC territory) representing 3,310,302 people have adopted Common Ground, including Alhambra, Anaheim, Artesia, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Bell, Bell Gardens, Bellflower, Bradbury, Brea, Buena Park, Cerritos, Claremont, Commerce, Cudahy, Duarte, El Monte, Fullerton, Hawaiian Gardens, Huntington Park, Irwindale, La Habra Heights, La Mirada, La Palma, La Puente, La Verne, Lakewood, Long Beach, Los Alamitos, Lynwood, Maywood, Monrovia, Montebello, Monterey Park, Norwalk, Paramount, Pasadena, Pico Rivera, Placentia, Pomona, Rosemead, San Dimas, San Gabriel, Santa Fe Springs, Seal Beach, Sierra Madre, Signal Hill, South El Monte, South Gate, South Pasadena, Vernon, Walnut, West Covina, and Whittier.

Twelve cities have adoption of the plan under consideration. The City of Diamond Bar voted not to adopt the plan, and the City of Industry voted to rescind its earlier approval of the Plan.

B. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

On Tuesday, May 14, 2000 the Board of Supervisors of Los Angeles County approved Common Ground with one abstention. The Orange County Board of Supervisors is currently reviewing the Plan, and may consider adoption during the month of July.

C. WATER ENTITIES

The San Gabriel Valley Water Association, the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, and the Central Basin Water Association are currently reviewing the Plan, as modified by the proposed Water Addendum, (discussed below in Section 6).

3. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

A. CITIES

Outreach to cities during Phase II generally focused on three general topics: (1) approval of *Common Ground*; (2) encouraging cities to develop City-Specific Appendices to *Common Ground* (described more fully in Section VI.B of this report); and (3) encouraging cities to attend the RMC's first Project Development Workshop (described more fully in Section 5.C below). To serve as primary liaison between the RMC and the cities, EIP Associates team hired Bobby Cochran, former RMC Executive Secretary to conduct outreach to the cities.

In order to secure approval of *Common Ground* by the cities, eight copies of the plan were distributed to each city at meetings of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (on December 11, 2001); the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (on December 11, 2001) and the Orange County League of Cities (on December 12, 2001). Copies of the report were sent directly to those cities that did not attend the COG or League of Cities meetings. The eight copies were intended for each City Council member, the City Manager, the City Attorney, and the RMC's contact. (*Common Ground* copies were also distributed to stakeholders who had commented on the Draft version of the Plan, the stakeholder list of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, and other interested groups.)

RMC staff then began a series of contacts via e-mail, phone, and in-person to discuss the approval process for the plan. At meetings with city staff, the RMC contact was provided a sample staff report and resolution (which were developed by the Gateway Council of Governments). A total of thirty-six meetings were held with the cities (and the County of Los Angeles, the Main San Gabriel Watermaster and the Central Basin Water Association). These meetings were combined with numerous phone follow-ups and conversations. On average, each City received three phone calls before the Open Space Plan was adopted. In addition, some cities requested that an RMC representative attend a city (parks or planning) commission meeting, or the city council meeting where the plan was considered. In total, RMC staff attended four city commission meetings and seventeen city council meetings.

Following the announcement of the Project Development Workshop (described below), RMC staff followed up with a phone call to each of the City representatives to encourage their participation.

Following transmittal of the template for City-Specific Appendices (described below) RMC staff followed up with each City to assist with the completion and comprehension of what content should be included in a City Appendix. As of June 1, 2002, twelve cities had submitted City Appendices and several others have indicated their intent to develop an appendix for their city. Once the appendices were received, the Project Identification Forms included were entered into the RMC's project database (both in Access and ArcView GIS).

B. RMC BROCHURE

The Phase II scope included a task to “design and print 2,000 copies of a pamphlet that has a customized map of the RMC territory and clear, concise language of the mission, near term and long term projects.” The consultant team discussed the concept of the pamphlet (or brochure) with the RMC staff and developed a concept for the content and layout of the document. Eventually, it was decided to discuss the past, present and future of the watersheds as the basic concept, with a map of the RMC territory that would show city boundaries and illustrate conceptual projects.

After an augment to the Phase II contract was approved, it was determined that insufficient funds were available to cover the augment. The RMC proposed that printing of the brochure be deferred, and the funds allocated for printing be allocated to other Phase II tasks. The final version of the brochure (which is

illustrated with photos from *Common Ground*) is included in the Appendix. The text of the brochure is provided below.

■ Past

Before the arrival of European settlers, the San Gabriel and Los Angeles rivers flowed free, and the land next to the rivers was crowded with trees, wild grapes, and native plants. Animals and fish thrived, and steelhead trout grew up to two feet in length. The land near the Los Angeles River was so lush and green, a farming village was founded. That village prospered and became the City of Los Angeles.

But things changed. More settlers arrived and built more farms, homes, and businesses and diverted water from the rivers. As the population grew, so did the demand for more land and water. The rivers were drained and wells were dug to reach groundwater. People built too close to the rivers, and when heavy winter rains turned the rivers into raging torrents, homes and businesses were flooded. To protect people and property from flooding, the rivers were lined with concrete and hidden behind walls. The rivers became polluted and in some areas, groundwater became contaminated. Litter tossed on the streets was washed down storm drains and ended up on the beaches. Our rivers have been abused and forgotten.

■ Present

The rivers are no longer functioning as healthy natural systems. Urban development has reduced pervious open space. Existing parks are overcrowded and poorly maintained, habitat for wildlife is scarce, and water quality remains a concern in the rivers, groundwater and at our beaches. We need new solutions to these problems.

■ Future

What Can Be Done?

Additional open space must be acquired along the rivers and tributaries, in the mountains, hills and foothills, and especially in urban areas. Parkways must be created along the rivers, to create a green ribbon of open space from the mountains to the sea. Critical habitat must be preserved; habitat linkages and/or corridors preserved or established; and wetlands must be preserved, restored, and created. A comprehensive network of trails and bike paths must be established that connects our cities, and provides access to the mountains, the beaches, and urban open spaces. Public lands must be managed for the benefit of the people and to preserve, protect, and enhance natural resources.

Who Can Respond?

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, or Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) was created in 1999 to preserve urban open space and habitat for the enjoyment of, and appreciation by, present and future generations. To fulfill that mission, the RMC will undertake projects that provide low-impact recreation, education, wildlife and habitat restoration, and watershed improvements, prioritizing river-related recreation, greening, aesthetic improvements, and wildlife habitat.

■ Inside Panel

What Can the RMC Do?

To preserve urban open space for present and future generations, the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) will undertake a wide range of projects along the rivers, the tributaries, in the mountains, hills, and foothills, and throughout the urbanized areas of the RMC's territory. The RMC will also assist counties, cities, public agencies, non-profit groups and community-based organizations in developing projects that promote watershed restoration, provide for low-impact recreation, educate the public about the rivers and

our watersheds, protect and conserve habitat, restore and create wetlands, and provide for other watershed improvements.

What Type of Projects Does the RMC Encourage?

River Parkway

A continuous ribbon of open space can be created from the mountains to the sea along the San Gabriel River, the Lower Los Angeles River, and the Rio Hondo, by acquiring land along the rivers, redeveloping sites to serve multiple purposes, and expanding existing pockets of open space. Landscaped areas on both sides of the rivers could provide parks with passive recreation and natural areas with native plants and habitat for wildlife and migratory birds. These green spaces promote groundwater infiltration and enhance flood protection by serving as buffers between the rivers and adjacent land uses. Trails and bike paths could provide opportunities for recreation and an alternative to congested streets.

Tributaries

Similar to river parkways, open spaces along tributaries provide an opportunity to extend ribbons of green space throughout the watersheds, connecting those communities not located directly on the rivers, and expanding the network of trails and bike paths. Restoration of riparian (or streamside) vegetation would provide much-needed habitat for plants, animals, birds, and aquatic species.

Habitat Conservation

Important habitat areas need to be protected, and the native plants and wildlife preserved. Linkages between patches of habitat must be maintained or established to maintain biodiversity and ecological integrity. Wetlands need to be restored or expanded to treat urban run-off, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat.

Mountains, Hills, and Foothills

The Angeles National Forest provides protection to vast amounts of open space in the RMC territory. But large portions of the mountains, foothills, and hills have no such protection. Pressure for urban development will continue to push subdivisions into these areas, therefore preservation of these open spaces are important to preserve open space, conserve habitat and promote groundwater infiltration.

Trails and Bike Paths

Bike paths and trails provide opportunities for recreation and a viable alternative to the use of an automobile. Gaps in existing trails and paths need to be identified and addressed. Trails and bike paths must be included in river parkways and along tributaries. Trails and bike paths can knit together parks, open spaces, and our communities.

Cultural and Historic Sites

Our region has a rich and diverse collection of cultural and historic sites and buildings. Many of these facilities are in need of preservation or conservation, and lack interpretive information that can teach residents about indigenous peoples and the historical development of our watersheds. Historic and cultural sites need to be preserved, protected, and integrated into parks and open spaces as valued amenities.

What Can You Do?

Call, write or talk to your federal, state, and local elected representatives and tell them we need more regional parks, open space, and wildlife habitat. Implementing the plan will require more funding. Our elected representatives must work together to get the necessary funds so we can improve our quality of life.

Adopt a lifestyle that is kind to our rivers, watersheds, and the planet:

- Don't litter. Clean up after your pets.
- Use "green" products that are friendly to the environment.
- Recycle and reuse products whenever possible.
- Use fertilizers and pesticides with care.
- Plant trees and plants that provide habitat for birds, butterflies and wildlife.
- Reduce energy consumption and conserve water.
- Carpool or take the bus to work. Walk to the store or ride a bicycle.
- Collect rainwater for your plants.
- Teach your children to care for the environment.

We're All in This Together

Each of us can make a difference. We all deserve to live in a cleaner, greener, and healthier region.

"The task ahead of us is never as great as the power behind us."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

C. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

The Working Group's Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach subcommittee recommended that the RMC conduct a project development workshop to inform cities, nonprofits and community-based organizations about the type of projects that the RMC encourage, highlight the benefits of multi-objective projects, and provide an opportunity for the Resources Agency to provide information concerning information on the Los Angeles River Parkway and the San Gabriel River Watershed, San Gabriel Mountains and Lower Los Angeles River grant programs funded by Proposition 12.

The Phase II consultant team developed a draft curriculum for the workshop, which was revised with the assistance of the subcommittee. The agenda included an overview of the RMC (including a summary of Common Ground), discussion of project opportunities along the rivers and tributaries; presentation on project success stories, a panel discussion on project funding opportunities, and a presentation on the Proposition 12 grant programs.

The RMC's contact database was sorted to identify city representatives, nonprofit groups, and community-based organizations. A list of nonprofit groups was reviewed with the subcommittee to identify other potential contacts. This list of contacts was expanded to include the mailing lists for the RMC Board and the Working Group. Altogether, a list of approximately 450 cities, nonprofits, community-based organizations, and individuals was developed.

Notice of the workshop was sent to the contact lists (via e-mail, or mail when no e-mail address could be identified), including a fact sheet on the workshop, a project identification form (to encourage these groups to identify potential projects), and a workshop flyer. In addition, a press release for the workshop was sent to eighteen media outlets. Approximately eighty-five individuals confirmed their attendance in advance of the workshop.

The workshop was held on April 19, 2002 (at the Los Angeles County Public Works building in Alhambra), and was attended by ninety-eight individuals from cities, agencies, nonprofit groups and community-based organizations. Workshop materials (which are included in the Appendix to this report) distributed at the meeting included:

- Workshop Agenda
- RMC Fact Sheet

- Map of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Watersheds
- Summary of Proposition 40 funding
- List of Water Related Funding Sources (including Proposition 13)
- Reference List of Watershed Restoration Action Strategies in Southern California
- List Other Potential Funding Sources

The agenda for the workshop, and the participating speakers are listed below. (A copy of the PowerPoint presentations is included in the Appendix to this report.)

- I. Welcome
 - Belinda Faustinos, RMC Interim Executive Office—Welcome and Moderator
- II. RMC Overview
 - Frank Colonna, RMC Board Chair—Welcome and RMC Overview
 - Mark Horne, EIP Associates—*Common Ground* Overview, and Facilitator
- III. Project Opportunities
 - Suzanne Avila, City of Azusa—Azusa Riverfront Wilderness Park
 - Eileen Takata, Northeast Trees—San Jose Creek Restoration
 - Jessica Hall, Northeast Trees—South Gate Restoration
 - Michael Drennan, MWH—Multiple-Objective Projects, the LA County Public Works watershed project in Sun Valley and TreePeople’s work at Broadus Elementary School
- IV. Project Success Stories
 - Carrie Sutkin, 1st Supervisorial District—El Bosque del Rio Hondo
 - Julia Gonzales, City of Maywood—Maywood Riverfront Park
 - Vince Torres, City of Paramount—Ralph Dills Park Expansion
 - Melanie Winter, The River Project—Valley Heart Greenway
- V. Project Funding Opportunities
 - Rick Harter, LA/SG Watershed Council—Prop 12 & 13 Funds
 - Shirley Birosik, LA Regional Water Quality Board—Other Funding Opportunities
 - Joan Hartman, Wetlands Recovery Project—Other Funding Opportunities
- VI. Proposition 12 River Grant Programs
 - Susan Ross, Resources Agency—Prop 12 Grant Guidelines and Application Process

Following the workshop, letters of thanks went out to the speakers and participants. In addition, the contact list was sent out to attendees in an effort to continue one of the themes of the workshop: “creating partnerships.” Workshop materials have also been made available on the RMC website.

While the first Project Development Workshop focused on project development related to rivers and tributaries, a subsequent RMC workshop has been suggested to discuss projects throughout the watershed, possibly during fall 2002.

D. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM

As requested by the Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach Subcommittee, a Project Identification Form was developed and transmitted to the cities in the RMC territory (as part of the City-

Specific Appendix template) and to non-profit groups and community-based organizations (in conjunction with the announcement of the Project Development Workshop, described above).

The introduction to the form includes the following text:

“The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, or Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) was created in 1999 to preserve urban open space and habitat for the enjoyment of, and appreciation by, present and future generations. To meet this charge, RMC will undertake a wide range of projects along the rivers, the tributaries, in the mountains, hills and foothills, and throughout the urbanized areas of the RMC’s territory. The RMC will also assist the counties, cities, public agencies, non-profit groups and community-based organizations in developing projects that promote watershed restoration, provide for low-impact recreation, educate the public about the rivers and our watersheds, protect and conserve habitat, restore and create wetlands, and expand open space.

The attached Project Identification Form is intended to encourage the development and identification of potential projects within the RMC territory, and to help the RMC assess the need for open space and watershed-related projects. The counties, cities, public agencies, non-profit groups and community-based organizations are encouraged to fill out the form and return it to the RMC...”

Attached to the form (which is reproduced on the following page) is a “key” that explains how to fill it out.

As of June 7, 2002, seventy three project locations have been entered in to the Project Map (developed in conjunction with the work of the Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways, and Corridors Subcommittee) and entered in the Access database (developed as part of the Phase II scope, and described in Section 7 below). The map of proposed projects was displayed to the RMC Board at their meeting on June 7, 2002. As future projects are submitted, the map will be updated to display all pending and potential projects.

San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
 "Rivers and Mountains Conservancy" (RMC)

Project Identification Form

City/Organization: _____

Project Title: _____

Project Location/Jurisdiction: _____

(Provide a street address, jurisdiction and/or identify Thomas Bros. map page
 and attach copy of map page with site clearly indicated)

Project Type (check all those that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Parkway | <input type="checkbox"/> Tributaries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mountains, Hills & Foothills | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Lands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trails/Bike Paths | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation of New Open Space | <input type="checkbox"/> Existing Open Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Flood Protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Recharge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

Site Description

Size (acres): _____ Trail Miles: _____

Current use and condition: _____

Single or multiple owners (if known): _____

Project Description: (Briefly describe what is proposed, whether any previous plans or studies have been completed, and the current status of the project.)

Estimated Project Cost:

Acquisition: _____

Development: _____

Total: _____

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

E. GIS CONSORTIUM

The Phase II scope included a requirement to “...facilitate at least three GIS data gathering and communication meetings between government entities and universities...”

Outreach efforts to create a GIS Consortium were conducted in December and January to public agencies, educational institutions, and other potentially interested parties. Based upon discussions with RMC staff, the RMC’s GIS project manager (in the Department of Fish and Game) the following goals for the GIS Consortium were identified:

- Facilitate a discussion of existing and potential uses of GIS in the greater San Gabriel and Los Angeles River watershed area;
- Assemble an inventory of data sets available for sharing;
- Identify gaps in existing data and develop a strategy for obtaining or creating those data;
- Establish a framework for continuing the work of the Consortium

The initial invitation to participate in the Consortium was sent to approximately 75 people. The GIS Consortium was convened for three meetings: January 24, March 14, and May 23, 2002. Attendance at the first meeting was 43 participants; the other two meetings drew about 20 participants.

At the first meeting, the discussion included an overview of the RMC Mission, background on Phase II of the Open Space Plan and the goals of the consortium, examples of GIS applications, a demonstration of the RMC GIS database and catalog and a discussion of the potential for data sharing. The second meeting included presentations on the GIS programs at Rio Hondo College, the University of Southern California, and the Central Coast Joint Data Committee (which had developed a Memorandum of Understanding that facilitated sharing of GIS data). In addition, the potential for an information clearinghouse (as an alternative to data sharing was discussed, along with identification of data that the participants would most like to see developed. At the third meeting, presentations included the Neighborhood Knowledge Los Angeles (and the in-development Neighborhood Knowledge California) by the UCLA School of Public Policy, the Stream Habitat Assessment on Malibu Creek by Heal the Bay and discussion of the proposal to form State and Regional GIS Councils, by the Southern California Association of Governments.

Although there was a positive response to the idea of a Consortium, participants were generally reluctant at this early stage to commit to sharing data or to any particular structure for the group. There is definite interest in continuing the exchange of ideas. The Los Angeles & San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council has offered to take on the role of coordinating future Consortium activities. Agendas and meeting summaries are included in the Appendix.

4. EXPANSION OF COMMON GROUND

A. ADDENDA

The Phase II scope for the Open Space Plan included the development of an addendum, or addenda, to augment or clarify information in *Common Ground* and extend the Plan to those portions of the RMC territory outside of the watersheds of the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers. Two addenda were developed as part of the Phase II process, to address the Northern Slope of the San Gabriel Mountains, and to address concerns of the San Gabriel Valley Water Association, the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, and the Central Basin Water Association related to how Water Resources were addressed in *Common Ground*.

It is the intent to incorporate the Addenda as supplements to *Common Ground*, and upon the next printing, to incorporate the information in the Addenda into the main body of the document. As additional relevant information is developed (e.g., from other Addenda, or from detailed planning related to specific issues, such as River Parkways or habitat), that information would also be incorporated into the Plan, so that the document continues to evolve and expand over time, to better inform the Conservancy's activities and projects.

Although portions of RMC's territory within Orange County are outside of the San Gabriel Watershed, because the cities of Buena Park and Anaheim adopted Common Ground (and thereby extended the concepts embodied in the plan to include their entire jurisdictions), development of a separate addendum to address the southeastern portion of the RMC territory was not required. The RMC Board will be asked at a future meeting to administratively extend Common Ground to the entirety of that portion of the RMC's territory in Orange County.

1. Northern Slope of the San Gabriel Mountains

To address the northern portion of the RMC territory, an addendum was developed to address the northern slope of the San Gabriel Mountains, including (1) the southernmost portions of the upper Santa Clara River watershed, including the city of Santa Clarita and the town of Acton; (2) the land within the Angeles National Forest that drains towards the Antelope and Fremont Valleys; and (3) the northern foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, which form the southern boundary of the Antelope Valley, including a portion of the City of Palmdale, and the eastern portion of the community of Wrightwood. The Addendum was developed with input from the County of Los Angeles, the Cities of Santa Clarita and Palmdale, and the community of Acton, and is intended to advance a model for regional coordination in watershed planning.

The format of the Addendum follows that of *Common Ground*, with (1) an introduction that provides background and context, (2) a description of physical setting and conditions, and (3) a Vision for the Future, which describes relevant guiding principles, describes strategies and opportunities, and discusses next steps.

The introduction address background and acknowledges the planning context, which includes the Santa Clara River Park Project (developed by the City of Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department), the Santa Clarita Valleywide General Plan Update (a joint project of the City of Santa Clarita and the County of Los Angeles to address the entire valley) and the Santa Clara River Enhancement and Management Plan (which describes riverwide and reach-by-reach recommendations for the river floodplain).

The description of Current Conditions acknowledges differences in the area's topography, climate, watershed hydrology (as the area drains via the Santa Clara River to the sea, or via various streams into the Antelope Valley), habitat (including several endangered species), open space, water supply (which includes substantial reliance on groundwater), water quality, flood protection, and regional demographics.

The discussion of the Vision for the Future focuses on guiding principles and their consistency with the guiding principles included in the Vision statement developed for One Valley One Vision (OVOV). The

Vision and Guiding Principles of *Common Ground* support and are applicable to the entire Northern Slope and are consistent with many of the OVOV Vision and Guiding Principles. OVOV relates to the General Plan process and as such has a broader scope than Common Ground; thus not all OVOV principles correspond directly to watershed planning. The discussion of Strategies, Opportunities, and Next Steps recognizes that these concepts are relevant to the Northern Slope, and that preservation of the Santa Clara River is a worthy goal for the RMC to incorporate into future river-related planning.

On June 25, 2002, the City of Santa Clarita adopted Common Ground. As of June 30th 2002, the City of Palmdale is considering adoption.

2. Water

In response to concerns expressed by the San Gabriel Valley Water Association, the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and the Central Basin Water Association, a second addendum was developed to provide additional information and clarify certain issues related to water quality, supply and rights, and the conditions under which the RMC can undertake projects.

The format of the Draft Water Addendum follows that of Common Ground, with (1) an introduction that provides background, (2) a description of physical setting and conditions, and (3) a Vision for the Future, which describes guiding principles, opportunities, and next steps. Only those sections of Common Ground that are proposed to be revised via this Addendum are included in the document.

The Introduction provides an overview of the RMC's mission, and acknowledges that because of the broad mandate of the conservancy *Common Ground* addressed a wide range of issues related to the concept of watershed improvement, including some that are beyond the jurisdiction or abilities of the RMC to implement. The inclusion of these concepts was an attempt to broaden the discussion of these issues and to encourage public agencies, counties, cities, communities, neighborhoods, non-profit groups and community-based organizations to build partnerships and forge relationships that seek solutions to the problem associated with watershed restoration.

The discussion of Current Conditions included discussion of the variability of water supplies, an introduction to the groundwater section that more fully described infiltration, clarification of the issue of groundwater management in the San Gabriel Valley, expanded discussion of issues that may impact sources of imported water, clarification of responsibilities for managing water quality, included infiltration of stormwater runoff in the list of potential concerns related to groundwater recharge, augmented a statement concerning development of Total Maximum Daily Loads for the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers, and acknowledged the requirement for development of Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plans.

The discussion of the Vision for the Future proposed the modifications of the following Guiding Principles:

- Consistent with water quality standards, develop regional and subregional networks of stormwater detention areas where feasible
- Consistent with water quality standards, encourage new developments to detain stormwater onsite to mitigate runoff where feasible
- Consistent with water quality standards and water rights, restore the natural hydrologic functioning of subwatershed areas
- Consistent with water quality standards and water rights, maintain sufficient flow conditions to support riparian/riverine habitats
- Consistent with water quality standards and water rights, encourage onsite collection of stormwater for irrigation and percolation, ~~where consistent with water quality goals and existing water rights~~
- Consistent with water quality standards, extend the distribution and range of uses for reclaimed water

Under the discussion of strategies, a new introductory paragraph for Water Resources is added, which acknowledges that the RMC may not undertake projects which (1) interferes with the duties of any watermaster, public agency, or other body or entity responsible for groundwater or surface water management or groundwater replenishment; (2) interferes or conflicts with any provision of any judgment or court order issued, or rule or regulation adopted, pursuant to any adjudication affecting water or water management in the San Gabriel River watershed and basin; (3) impedes or adversely impacts any previously adopted Los Angeles County Drainage Area project; (4) results in the degradation of water quality; or (5) interferes with, obstructs, hinders, or delays the exercise of, any water right by the owner of a public water system. The discussion of Next Steps is modified to acknowledge that water agencies and associations will continue to implement policies, programs and projects that enhance water supplies and protect water quality.

As of June 30, 2002, the San Gabriel Valley Water Association, the Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and the Central Basin Water Association, were still considering adoption of *Common Ground*.

B. CITY-SPECIFIC APPENDICES

The Phase II scope included a requirement to “create a template for the cities to develop appendixes to the Plan that include specific projects that accomplish the strategies as outlined in the Plan. Encourage the cities to individualize their appendixes.”

The consultant team developed a template for the City-Specific Appendices that covered four basic topics: (1) identification of open space resources within each city, (2) discussion of any current plans to develop additional open space resources, (3) an overview of policies, programs or ordinances generally related to the concept of sustainability; and (4) identification of project.

The following sections provide the text included in the City-Specific Appendix Template

■ Open Space Resources

Common Ground included a description of the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers watersheds and listed major open space resources (Table 3, on page 31), however that list was limited to open space resources greater than 100 acres in size. In order to develop a more complete catalog of existing open space resources in the RMC territory, please identify all open space features in your community. Examples may include:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Aquatic centers | ■ Beaches |
| ■ Bike paths | ■ Community gardens |
| ■ Habitat preserves | ■ Golf courses |
| ■ Marinas | ■ Nature centers |
| ■ Open space preserves | ■ Parks |
| ■ Playgrounds | ■ Recreation Centers |
| ■ Skate parks | ■ Sports fields |
| ■ Trails | ■ Wetlands |

Provide the street addresses of each facility and if possible, provide a map (or maps) that clearly identifies the location of those facilities.

■ Current Plans

Common Ground advocates expansion of open space, preservation of habitat, and optimization of water resources. Please identify any adopted plans for provision of additional Open Space features (using the same examples provided above), including those features that may be under construction or that have been funded.

Common Ground includes a range of guiding principles that are intended to help restore balance between human and natural systems, and thereby promote watershed restoration. These concepts generally fall under the topic of sustainability, which has been defined as “*meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs*” (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987). Portland, Oregon is an good example of city with comprehensive policies and programs that promote sustainability (<http://www.sustainableportland.org/>). Please identify any policies, programs, or ordinances that promote watershed restoration. Individual cities may not have defined specific sustainability policies, but may have a range of policies, programs, or ordinances that promote sustainability. Examples may include:

- Cultural resource preservation
- Energy conservation
- Environmental education and outreach
- Flood mitigation
- Greenbelt maintenance
- Green buildings
- Green-waste management (including composting)
- Groundwater recharge
- Hazardous substances management
- Mixed-use development
- Recreation
- Solid waste management (including recycling)
- Street-tree or other public-space greening projects
- Sustainable landscapes
- Transportation (e.g., pedestrian mobility, bikeways and alternative transportation)
- Urban runoff control
- Water conservation

Please provide a list and short description of any adopted policies, programs, or ordinances that promote watershed restoration or sustainability.

■ Project Identification

To assist the RMC in identifying the total need for open space projects within the RMC’s territory, please identify future projects within your city (not already included above), using the format provided on the Project Identification Form.

The City-Specific Appendix Template was distributed to the cities in the RMC territory on March 26. Bobby Cochran then followed up with each City to assist with comprehension of what content should be included in a City Appendix and to encourage preparation of an Appendix. As of June 1, 2002, twelve cities had submitted City Appendices and several others have indicated their intent to file an appendix. Once the appendices were received, the Project ID forms included were entered into the RMC’s project database (both in Access and ArcView GIS).

As of June 26th, 16 cities have completed Appendices, including

- Bellflower
- Claremont
- El Monte
- Fullerton
- Glendora
- La Habra
- La Habra Heights

- La Verne
- Pico Rivera
- San Dimas
- San Gabriel
- Santa Fe Springs
- Seal Beach
- Signal Hill
- South Gate

The main body of these City-Specific Appendices is included at the end of this report.

5. RMC TOOLS

A. PROJECT EVALUATION SOFTWARE

The scope for Phase II indicated that the consultant team should “create computer programs to input, analyze, evaluate, and track projects.” To clarify the objectives for the software, determine input parameters and desired output, the consultant team met with RMC staff on January 8 and February 14. As a result of those meetings, the following goals, input parameters, and program linkages for the software were identified.

■ Program Goals

- Track, identify, query and view information about projects for the purpose of tracking progress and/or providing supporting information for evaluating projects for funding.
- Share this information and methodology with other state agencies.

■ Information to Track

- Property information: who owns the parcel(s), assessor’s parcel number, name of the property, location (city, county, and legislative district).
- Project description: project type (as per page 111 in *Common Ground*), location, ecosystem type, acreage of project, text description.
- Quantifiable amenities: length of trail/corridor/river front, distance to river, etc.
- Tracking progress, project advocate or initiator, appraisal status, Phase I or II analysis, CEQA process/approvals/status, funding sources and status, estimated completion dates, sunset on spending, partners.

■ Linkages to GIS

- New data tables would be stored in ArcView to allow linkage to existing data.
- Queries could be made across existing data to determine ecosystem/habitat type, vegetation, endangered species, adjacent land uses, natural hazards, etc.
- Future acquisition of parcel maps in GIS format from LA/Orange County for project area could be integrated into an existing “projects” data layer.

■ Entry of Evaluation Criteria

- Projects would be rated by RMC staff according to the RMC’s evaluation criteria, and the points awarded would be entered into the project database.
- Ranking should be computed numerically for all criteria or for specific criteria, for all projects or selected projects.

■ Program Output

- Maps should identify project location, relation to the river(s), adjacent land use, Thomas Guide or topographic data; or group projects categorized by status.
- Reports could include a project profile showing selected data on file for selected project(s), project status (sorted by geographic area and/or status and/or project type) and a narrative summary of project status.

■ Interface

- Have a customized interface to assist in data entry, mapping, and reporting.
- Interface should be kept to a minimum to reduce the need for future modifications should requirements change.

After considering potential software options, a customized Project Tracking and Evaluation software was developed as a Microsoft Access database with a link to ArcView for mapping and spatial analysis. The software provides three basic data input forms, the first based upon the Project Identification Form (including in Section 3.D above), the second to provide information useful for RMC purposes and the third to input rankings from the RMC's current project evaluation criteria.

As of June 7, the system contained seventy-three proposed or in process projects. The project information sources include Proposition A and Proposition 13 grant applications, Working Group members, and the Project Identification Forms sent to the cities. A list of projects developed by June 15, 2002 is provided in the below.

Projects in the Project Tracking and Evaluation System			
	<i>Location</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Project Name</i>
1	Azusa	E	Regional bike path extension
2	Azusa	P	Landscaping Spreading Basins
3	Azusa	P	Forest Gateway Park
4	Azusa	E	River Wilderness Park
5	Bassett	E	Woodland (Duck) Farm
6	Bell	P	River Dr Beautification Project
7	Bell Gardens	P	Hannon/Scout park expansion
8	Bell Gardens	E	Park & bike trail
9	Bellflower	P	Byron Zing Park improvement
10	Bradbury	P	Bodkin Property
11	Bradbury	P	Bradbury Estates
12	Brea	P	Brea/Tonner Crk Watershed
13	Cerritos	E	Liberty Park Improvement
14	Claremont	P	Johnson's Pasture
15	Claremont	P	E. of Johnson's Pasture
16	Claremont	E	Padua Ave. Park
17	Claremont	P	Johnson's Pasture Expansion
18	Commerce	P	City of Commerce Sports Fields
19	Commerce	P	Veterans Park Basketball Crts
20	Covina	E	City of Riverine Erosion
21	El Monte	E	Durfee Sch. Recreation Area
22	El Monte	P	Lashbrook Park
23	Fullerton	P	West Coyote Hills
24	Fullerton	E	Laguna Lake Enhancement
25	Glendora	P	Big Dalton Creek Restoration
26	Huntington Park	E	Westside Park Expansion
27	La Mirada	E	La Mirada Creek Park Restoration
28	La Verne	P	Citrus Regional Bike Trail
29	La Verne	P	Stephens Ranch Rd Trail
30	La Verne	P	Valley Rancho Park
31	Lakewood	P	W San Gabriel River park
32	Long Beach	P	Los Cerritos Wetlands
33	Long Beach	P	Chavez
34	Long Beach	P	L.A. Co. DPW Horse Leases
35	Long Beach	P	Mobile Home Park
36	Long Beach	P	67 th Street Park
37	Long Beach	P	Boy Scout Camp
38	Long Beach	P	Public Service Maint Yard
39	Long Beach	P	LA River Greenbelt

Projects in the Project Tracking and Evaluation System

	<i>Location</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Project Name</i>
40	Long Beach	P	19th and San Francisco
41	Long Beach	E	DeForest Wetlands
42	Long Beach	P	Wrigley Heights Parkway
43	Long Beach	P	Chavez-Drake Greenway
44	Long Beach	P	6th Street Tidal Wetlands
45	Long Beach	P	Dominguez Gap Wetlands
46	Lynwood	P	Lynwood Nature Park
47	Maywood	E	Maywood Riverfront Park
48	Monrovia	P	Clamshell Canyon
49	NE Los Angeles	E	Audubon Center in Debs Park
50	Paramount	E	Ralph Dills Park expansion
51	Pasadena	P	Flint Wash Bridge Crossing
52	Pasadena	E	N Arroyo Seco Restoration
53	Pasadena	E	S Arroyo Seco Restoration
54	Pico Rivera	P	Paseo del Rio
55	Pico Rivera	P	Paseo del Rio (SG)
56	San Dimas	E	Horsethief Cyn Park Plan
57	San Dimas	E	San Dimas Cyn Golf Course
58	Santa Fe Springs	P	Rio San Gabriel Nature Sanctuary
59	Seal Beach	E	SG River Trail North
60	Seal Beach	E	SG River Trail South
61	Sierra Madre	P	Thomas/Wadell Tracts
62	Sierra Madre	P	Willis Tract
63	Signal Hill	P	Cha'wot Nature Preserve
64	South El Monte	E	Rio Vista Park restoration
65	South El Monte	E	Restoration & greening
66	South El Monte	E	Restoration & greening
67	South Gate	E	Hollydale Park improvement
68	South Gate	P	Southern Ave. Greenbelt
69	Walnut	E	Lemon Creek Restoration
70	Walnut	E	Snow Creek Restoration
71	West Covina	P	Galster Park Trails
72	Whittier Narrows	P	San Gabriel River Center
73	Whittier Narrows	P	Lario Creek Corridor Restoration

* E = Existing/Underway; P = Proposed

The final version of the Project Evaluation Software was installed at the RMC's office on May 28, 2002. Complete system documentation is included in the Appendix.

B. GIS DATABASE

The scope for Phase II indicated that the consultant team should “employ GIS technical assistance to update and add to the RMC GIS database.” To clarify the objectives for this task, the consultant team had discussions with the RMC staff, and Mr. Paul Veisze, of the California Department of Fish and Game, who had been identified at the RMC's project manager for the GIS component of Phase II. As a result of those discussions, the following scope of work (dated January 8, 2002) was identified.

■ GIS SCOPE

1. Reconcile the differences between the data files on the RMC internal Gateway computer system hard drive and the external hard drive delivered by FORMA Systems to the RMC in July 2001.
 - A. FORMA Systems will conduct an on-site review, identify, and resolve data file differences between the internal and external hard drives.
 - B. FORMA Systems will copy data files between the external and internal drives to resolve differences and create identical content both drives.
 - C. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
2. RMC GIS Database Core Documentation Integration
 - A. Archive the report data spreadsheets from Phase I
 - B. FORMA Systems will integrate records within the following documents providing the RMC with a means to navigate, and communicate its contents to the public.
 - 1) New report data spreadsheets (from FORMA Systems Final Report Appendices from Phase I)
 - 2) The road map documentation
 - 3) RMC CERES online catalog
 - C. The documentation integration tasks will include:
 1. Adding and editing records within the three documents named above to make them contain records with the same descriptive information.
 2. Adding the CERES online OID number to the pertinent report spreadsheet appendices only making the online catalog and report spreadsheet appendices contain identical OID numbers for proper linking.
 - a) Tasks within this scope item are limited to existing records and a maximum of 5 new records collected during Phase II being integrated. Additional new records above the maximum amount will be integrated on a time and materials basis.
 - b) Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
3. Review and begin work on follow-up items dated 5/7/2001 as listed by Gordon Robinson, of FORMA Systems, and updates received since July 2001.
 - A. Contact, collect, catalog into CERES and create GIS system metadata for current Orange County bike trail data.
 - B. Contact, collect, catalog one record into CERES using given GIS system metadata for current San Gabriel Watermaster individual GIS data sets collected via the Internet.
 - 1) FORMA Systems will collect a total of 16 available GIS data sets and metadata information and catalog as one record into the CERES catalog.
 - 2) FORMA Systems will import the 16 data sets into ArcInfo and coverages will be created. The coverages will then be projected into the correct ALBERS projection.
 - 3) The metadata will also be copied into the GIS system in the current condition and format.
 - C. Integrate USFS Incident Management metadata into CERES and GIS system as collected from Marilyn Porter.
 - 1) Review and update, if needed, CERES catalog record for USFS Incident Management Data.
 - 2) Update GIS system metadata by adding metadata to GIS system in its present condition.
 - 3) Contact Marilyn Porter asking for individual and detailed GIS data set metadata.
 - D. Update the RMC CERES online catalog records to include correct and current up-to-date information.

- 1). Records within the RMC CERES online catalog that need updating will be identified, recorded, and updated. Records that need updating will be identified through random searches, and concentrated searches within the CERES catalog search forms. Errors that have already been identified will be corrected first.
- 2) The OID numbers for each record that is identified will be recorded in a document for easy review by the RMC staff.
- 3) Records will be updated within the RMC CERES online catalog via the Internet with the correct information.
- 4) At the end of the update process, a brief review of the updates will be completed for quality control purposes.
- E. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
4. Make recommendations for future management of database with respect to software and data updates. Develop protocol for adding new data to the RMC database.
 - A. Provide the RMC with a manual stating protocol for incorporating future data sources into the GIS system.
 - 1) Manual will include data documentation instructions and one sample for each subtask below:
 - a) Documenting the data set record into the online RMC CERES catalog
 - b) Documenting the data set record within the RMC internal GIS system hard drive
 - c) Documenting the new report data spreadsheets (from FORMA Systems Final Report Appendices from Phase I)
 - d) Documenting the road map file
 - 2) Manual will include step-by-step geographic projection samples for projecting ArcInfo coverages and ArcView shape files into the ALBERS projected coordinate system.
 - a) One sample each of projecting an ArcInfo coverage from UTM NAD27 Zone 11 Meters, and California State Plane Zone V NAD83 US Survey Feet and US Feet projected coordinate systems to the ALBERS projection system. A total of three samples showing step-by-step methodology will be provided.
 - b). One sample each of projecting an ArcView shape file from UTM NAD27 Zone 11 Meters, and California State Plane Zone V NAD83 US Survey Feet and US Feet projected coordinate systems to the ALBERS projection system. A total of three samples showing step-by-step methodology will be provided. (Manual will include step-by-step data backup instructions for backing up the RMC internal GIS system hard drive.)
 - B. Within the manual, provide the RMC with the appropriate GIS contact and reseller information for receiving software updates from ESRI.
 1. Includes costs of ArcView software upgrades and software ordering instructions.
 - C. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
5. Prepare 10 maps, 5 at 11"x17" size, and 5 at 34"x44" size in support of Phase II working group meetings.
 - A. Maps will contain specific data related to working group needs and requests.
 - B. Maps will be created using ArcView 3.2 software to meet the software compatibility requirements with the RMC.
 - C. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
6. Data acquisition to cover areas within the RMC approved boundary that were not covered in Phase I.
 - A. Identify, collect, and clip a maximum of 12 data sets using the newly approved RMC project bounding area. It will be necessary to redefine the project boundary area before beginning. Task 8a will need to be completed before beginning this step.
 - B. Paul Veisze from the California Department of Fish and Game will be responsible for correcting the data sets collected during Phase I.

- C. Project data sets, if required, into correct ALBERS projection.
 - D. Update metadata in GIS system and RMC online CERES catalog.
 - E. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
7. Analysis of the geographic data requirements implied by RMC Project Evaluation Criteria.
 - A. Analyze missing geographic data requirements in the RMC GIS database.
 - B. Create a report summary page identifying data sources, availability, and acquisition.
 - C. Review report summary page with the RMC and provide direction with action items for the RMC to coordinate future collection efforts.
 - D. One revision to the report summary page is included as part of this task.
 - E. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
 8. Develop conservancy-wide map template. Add base data layers, and base annotation.
 - A. Construct project boundary rectangle surrounding the RMC boundary.
 - B. Develop template project file (.apr) within ArcView 3.2 adding base data layers and base annotation.
 - C. The base data layers will include and is limited to: RMC boundary, TBM freeways, TBM major roads, community boundaries, major channels, major rivers, and lakes.
 - D. The base annotation will include and is limited to: TBM major road names, freeway symbols, community names, RMC boundary, and Pacific Ocean label.
 - E. Add legend items and symbolize layers.
 - F. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
 9. Develop detailed map template at city project level. Add base layers and annotation sources to fit higher resolution display.
 - A. Develop template project file (.apr) within ArcView 3.2 adding base data layers and base annotation. This template will be used to map the individual city projects.
 - B. The base data layers will include and is limited to: RMC boundary, TBM freeways, TBM major roads, TBM secondary and local roads, community boundaries, major channels, minor channels, major rivers, streams, and lakes.
 - C. The base annotation will include and is limited to: TBM major road names, TBM secondary road names, freeway symbols, and TBM community names.
 - E. Add legend items and symbolize layers on map.
 - F. Coordination of scope item through email and telephone correspondence, and project management.
 10. GIS Consortium support
 - A. Provide support to the RMC, working with project team, for tasks related to contacting organizations, follow-up with contacts, and documenting contacted individuals in GIS contact spreadsheets in preparation for 3 meetings.
 - B. Report findings through phone conferences, email messages, and meetings to the RMC and project team in order to acquire information for GIS Consortium meetings.
 - C. GIS Consortium meeting facilitation and attendance (3 meetings).

■ Phase II Priorities

Because this broad scope was identified well after the remainder of the Phase II activities had been scoped, in recognition that the scope described above could not be accommodated within the Phase II budget for GIS support, the following work priorities were established.

Priority One

- #1. Reconcile the differences between the data files on the RMC internal Gateway computer system hard drive and the external hard drive delivered by FORMA Systems to the RMC in July 2001.
- #2. RMC GIS Database Core Documentation Integration
- #3. Review and begin work on follow-up items dated 5/7/2001 as listed by Gordon Robinson, of FORMA Systems, and updates received since July 2001 (Items A through C only)
- #4. Make recommendations for future management of database with respect to software and data updates. Develop protocol for adding new data to the RMC database.
- #8. Develop conservancy-wide map template. Add base data layers, and base annotation.
- #9. Develop detailed map template at city project level. Add base layers and annotation sources to fit higher resolution display.

Priority 2

- #5. Prepare 10 maps, 5 at 11"x17" size, and 5 at 34"x44" size in support of Phase II working group meetings.
- #6. Data acquisition to cover areas within the RMC approved boundary that were not covered in Phase I.
- #7. Analysis of the geographic data requirements implied by RMC Project Evaluation Criteria.

In addition, it was recognized that item 10 (GIS Consortium support) was required by the Phase II scope.

FINAL STATUS**■ Task 1: Complete**

- a. FORMA Systems reviewed, identified and resolved data file differences between RMC's internal and external drives.
- b. FORMA Systems created identical drives by copying data between the two drives to make the drives identical.
- c. FORMA Systems managed this production with Frank Simpson.

■ Task 2: Complete

- a. Frank Simpson, on FORMA Systems direction, archived the report data spreadsheets from Phase I into the archive directory located in the previous directory location of the original file.
- b & c. FORMA Systems integrated all the documents to contain exact description information for each dataset, and exact matches for the OID numbers for appendix A and online catalog.
- d. All the records that were collected for the GIS of the RMC were analyzed. No new datasets were collected before the initiation of Phase II.
- e. FORMA Systems coordinated these efforts.

■ Task 3: Complete

- a. FORMA Systems coordinated delivery of the bike trail data to the RMC from the Orange County Transportation Authority, and Frank Simpson documented the datasets delivered, reprojected the data and added to the RMC database.
- b. Frank Simpson collected, cataloged, and projected the sixteen datasets available from the San Gabriel Watermaster website.
- c. Frank Simpson, contacted Marilyn Porter of the USFS Incident Management department to get more specific metadata. The USFS Incident Management department did not have any additional metadata regarding the USFS data we collected during Phase I. Frank will continue to try other departments for metadata regarding these datasets.
- d. Frank Simpson, on direction from FORMA Systems, has updated the CERES catalog, the final report Appendix A, metadata files, and the road map file with the most current information.

■ Task 4: Complete

- a. FORMA Systems with Frank Simpson have completed instructional manuals for RMC users to document the CERES catalog, individual metadata files, new report data spreadsheets, and the road map files.
- b. FORMA Systems have provided two step-by-step instructional manuals that help RMC users project shapefiles and ArcInfo Coverage datasets into the RMC Standard of Albers Conic Equal Area projection.
- c. FORMA Systems have completed a resale manual that provides RMC users with instructions to order software from FORMA Systems.

■ Task 5: Complete

- a. Frank Simpson and FORMA Systems have provided 10 maps to support the RMC working group meetings.

■ Task 6: Pending

■ Task 7: Pending

■ Task 8: Complete

- a. Frank Simpson and FORMA Systems created new rectangle boundary that surrounds the RMC Boundary.
- b. Frank Simpson with FORMA Systems developed a conservancy-wide template project file within ArcView 3.2.
- c. All base layers are included, RMC boundary, TBM freeways, TBM major roads, community boundaries, major channels, major rivers, and lakes.
- d. The base annotation layers within templates are TBM major road names, freeway symbols, community names, RMC Boundary, and Pacific Ocean labels.
- e. Legends were created for each template file that describes datasets that are displayed on the map.
- f. FORMA Systems coordinated this effort with RMC and Frank Simpson.

■ Task 9: Complete

- a. FORMA Systems and Frank Simpson developed template arc view shape (.apr) files within ArcView 3.2 for city project level detail.
- b. RMC Boundary, TBM freeways, TBM major roads, TBM secondary and local roads, community boundaries, major channels, minor channels, major rivers, streams and lakes were included as base layers.
- c. The annotation within each template is the RMC Boundary, freeway symbols, TBM major roads names, TBM secondary road names, and community boundaries.
- d. Legends were created for each template file that describes datasets that are displayed on the map.

■ Task 10: Complete

- a. Frank Simpson and FORMA Systems provided support to the RMC by contacting organizations, follow-up with contacts, and documented the contacted individuals in the GIS contact spreadsheet for the 3 meetings.
- b. FORMA Systems and Frank Simpson reported findings through phone conferences, email messages, and meeting to the RMC and project team in order to acquire information for GIS consortium meetings.
- c. GIS consortium meeting facilitation and attendance by FORMA Systems and Frank Simpson.

6. WORKING GROUP

A. CHARGE

At their meetings on December 14, 2001 and January 11, 2002, the RMC Board approved establishment of a Working Group to research, identify, and make recommendations to the Board concerning implementation of the plans and concepts described in *Common Ground*. The Board approved the following list of tasks for the Working Group to consider, with the assistance of the Phase II consultant team:

1. Project Development Strategy
 - A. Project Identification
 - Strategies for identifying project
 - Prioritization of projects
 - Identification of targets
 - Process to consider opportunities
 - B. RMC Projects
 - Acquire land
 - Plan projects
 - Implement project design
 - Management plan
 - C. City Projects
 - Project Generation
 - City-specific appendices to Common Group
 - Coaching
 - Workshops
 - Greening Institute
 - Design Guides
 - Project Development Template
 - Evaluation/Selection
 - Grant Administration
 - Support and Coordination
2. Open Space Management Strategy
 - Operating model (e.g., East Bay Regional Parks)
 - Maintenance
 - Security
 - Liability
 - Visitor Services
3. Subsequent Plans Strategy
 - A. Habitat
 - B. Rivers Parkway
 - C. Mountains, Hills, and Foothills
 - D. Trails and Bike Paths

E. Tributaries

F. Cultural Landscapes

4. Education and Outreach Strategy

- Public Communication
 - Brochure
 - Website
- Targeted Outreach
- Youth/Adult Education
- Educational/Interpretive Facilities

5. Long-Term Funding Strategy

- Government
- Private
- Foundation & Nonprofit

B. MEMBERSHIP

At their meeting on January 11, 2002, the RMC Board also approved a list of individuals for Executive Officer to invite as participants in the Working Group, and provided the Executive Officer with the authority to invite additional members to participate, which could include additions suggested by members of the Board.

Working Group participants included:

Ms. Karen Bane of the California Coastal Conservancy, staff to the Wetlands Recovery Project, and is interested using in constructed wetlands to meet water quality mandates. Ms. Bane has experience with wetland restoration in Long Beach and is also interested in habitat issues.

Mr. Jim Bickhart represented the Southern California Transportation and Land Use Coalition, a nonprofit organization recently formed to promote more sustainable development. Mr. Bickhart has worked on watershed management issues, including the Ballona Creek watershed, and assisted in development of the legislation that resulted Proposition 12 and the creation of the RMC.

Ms. Shirley Birosik is staff to the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, where she serves as watershed coordinator, and oversees the various subwatershed plans funded by Proposition 13.

Ms. Jane Bray is a Management and Community Relations consultant that brings many years of experience working with water agencies. Ms. Bray is former General Manager of the San Gabriel Municipal Water District and has served with the Watermaster and the Regional Water Board. Ms. Bray brings knowledge of the history of water rights decisions on the San Gabriel River and related water basins.

Mr. Bill Brown represented the US Forest Service with experience as the senior biologist of the Angeles National Forest. Mr. Brown noted that the Forest Service manages 20 to 25 percent of the open space in Los Angeles County, and indicated a desire for the Forest Service to act as a conduit between the upper and lower watersheds.

Mr. Mark Buehler of the Metropolitan Water District brought his expertise as an Environmental Engineer. He is Chair of the technical committee of the Water Augmentation Study currently being conducted by the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council.

Mr. Mike Egan represented the Gateway Cities C.O.G., and the City of Bellflower. Mr. Egan is interested in cooperating with the RMC to create much-needed parks and open space in the cities he represents. Mr. Egan was represented at some meetings by Deborah Chankan, who is from the City of Long Beach and currently on loan to the Gateway Cities C.O.G.

Mr. Mike Gold represents the Orange County Division of League of Cities and the Orange County C.O.G., and has a background in landscape planning. Mr. Gold participated in the group to represent the cities and carry the message of the RMC back to the community.

Ms. Joan Greenwood represented the Friends of the Los Angeles River, and has extensive knowledge of the lower Los Angeles River. Ms. Greenwood is an engineer with broad knowledge issues related to water quality groundwater, and site remediation.

Ms. Joan Hartman is Outreach Director of the Wetlands Recovery Project, which works on a wide variety of coastal enhancement projects. Ms. Hartman has been working with the Environment Now group to hire watershed coordinators (funded by a Proposition 13 grant) for each of the five counties in the region, to identify data gaps and watershed projects. Ms. Hartman is also working to form a coastal caucus of local legislators, to attract more watershed funding to Southern California.

Mr. David Jallo, staff from the Los Angeles County Parks, oversees the Whittier Narrows Nature Center. Mr. Jallo is a biologist interested in expansion of open space and the provision of interpretive experiences for visitors.

Mr. Christopher Kroll, California Coastal Conservancy staff, brought knowledge of habitat restoration and public access along the Los Angeles River. The Conservancy has funded a habitat restoration study in the on LA River habitat restoration in the Long Beach area. Mr. Kroll expressed interest determining how his organization can work with the RMC.

Ms. Jaqueline Lambrichts is a founder of the Friend of the San Gabriel River, which has received funding by CalFed to develop a citizen monitoring program for the river. Ms. Lambrichts would like to assist the RMC with citizen monitoring efforts, and in finding ways to attract the community to the rivers.

Ms. Yvette Martinez represented the office of Congresswoman Hilda Solis, and has experience in working with the federal government. Ms. Martinez noted the composition of the Working Group, and expressed a hope that the membership could reflect the diversity of the watershed. Ms. Martinez indicated a willingness to bring resources and staff time to the group.

Mr. Steve Miller represented the Foothill Wildlife Conservancy, which worked with the voters in the City of Monrovia to approve a tax increase to fund a wildlife preserve in their community. Mr. Miller would like to assist the RMC in identifying wildlife corridors.

Mr. Joseph Perez represented Solution Strategies and has extensive experienced with public outreach and education, and in issues related to the rivers and the watersheds. Mr. Perez indicated that his firm looks forward to assisting the RMC.

Ms. Claire Schlotterbeck, represented Hills for Everyone, has experience working in land preservation issues in the Whittier and Chino Hills. Ms. Schlotterbeck would like to learn from the Working Group and to provide assistance as needed.

Ms. Carrie Sutkin, represented the First Supervisorial District, worked on the LA River Master Plan, and helped develop a “Greening Institute” to assist cities and nonprofits in development of projects. Ms. Sutkin would like to assist the RMC in creating a system to fund projects and to conduct outreach to cities, and indicated that her office could provide resources for conducting community meetings.

Ms. Melanie Winter represented The River Project and has experience working with communities to create river enhancement projects. Ms. Winter has participated in habitat studies and is involved the Taylor Yard project. Ms. Winter wants to ensure that communities are involved in the design of projects that affect them, to create a sense of ownership.

Mr. Don Wolfe is Assistant Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, which operates most of the tributaries of the rivers as flood control channels. Mr. Wolfe acknowledged the Department's recent change in philosophy with the creation of a Watershed Management Division. Mr. Wolfe would bring knowledge, skills and resources to the Group, and ensure that the RMC's planning efforts complement the in-progress development of the San Gabriel River Master Plan.

Mr. Jeff Yann represented the Sierra Club, is member of the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority, and has a civil engineering background. Mr. Yann has been active in wildlife corridor work, and is especially interested in the Whittier Narrow. Recognizing the RMC's limited staffing, Mr. Yann would like to provide support to the organization.

In addition, RMC Board members Margaret Clark and Kathie Matsuyama attended and participated in several meetings of the Working Group and subcommittees.

C. SCHEDULE AND STRUCTURE

Because of the size of the group and the scope of their charge, the consultant team developed a two-tiered strategy for discussion of issues: some topics would be referred to subcommittees, while others would be discussed by the entire Working Group. In general, those topics that were the subject of "subsequent plans" (as suggested by *Common Ground*) were referred to subcommittees, while discussion of the other topics would be discussed by the entire Working Group. A conceptual action plan that reflected this strategy was developed and subsequently revised to reflect the status of discussions in early April. The revised action plan is presented on the following page.

In general, for those topics that would be discussed by the entire Working Group, the discussion was informed by a background paper (developed by the consultant team) distributed with the meeting agenda. Following the discussion of the topic, the consultant team would then draft a recommendation to reflect the general intent of the discussion. The draft recommendation was then distributed with the agenda for the subsequent meeting, at which time the proposed recommendation would be discussed, and if the Working Group was amenable, action on the recommendation would occur.

Five subcommittees were formed: Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways and Corridors; Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach; the (Woodland) Duck Farm project, Habitat, and Mountains, Hills and Foothills. For subcommittees, it was suggested that a subcommittee would report on its deliberations at one meeting, and action on a recommendation would occur at a subsequent meeting. However, because of the short timeframe of the Working Group (six months), only the recommendations from the Duck Farm subcommittees were discussed at two meetings. The remainder of the subcommittee recommendations was discussed at the final meeting of the Working Group.

The Working Group met on January 30, February 15, March 8, April 12, May 10, and May 31. The Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways, and Corridors subcommittee met on February 15, March 8 and 22, and April 5. The Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach subcommittee met on February 15, March 8 and 22, April 12, and May 10. The Duck Farm project subcommittee met on February 12, March 6 and 21, and April 11. The Habitat subcommittee met on March 6 and 21, April 11 and 25, and May 9 and 30. The Mountains, Hills, and Foothills subcommittee met on March 8 and 21, April 11 and 25, and May 9 and 30.

**Parkway and Open Space Plan Working Group
Revised Action Plan
(4/12/02)**

<i>Month</i>	<i>Topics</i>				
	<i>Project Development</i>	<i>Open Space Management</i>	<i>Subsequent Plans</i>	<i>Education and Outreach</i>	<i>Long-Term Funding</i>
January	Working Group discussion and formation of Subcommittees				
February	Subcommittee Meetings	Working Group discussion	Formation of Subcommittees		
March	Subcommittee Meetings	Continued discussion of recommendations to RMC Board	Subcommittee Meetings	Working Group discussion	
April	Subcommittee Meetings Project Development Workshop	Possible Action: Recommendations to RMC Board	Subcommittee Meetings	Discussion in Education and Outreach	Working Group discussion
May	Possible action: Recommendations on Project Development Strategy	Present WG Recommendations to RMC Board	Working Group discussion of Subcommittee recommendations	Possible Action: Recommendations to RMC Board	Possible Action: Recommendations to RMC Board
June	Possible WG action: Recommendations to RMC Board regarding the Duck Farm. Present Recommendations on Project Development to RMC Board		Possible Action: Recommendations to RMC Board	Present WG Recommendations to RMC Board	Present WG Recommendations to RMC Board
			Present WG Recommendations to RMC Board		

D. SUBCOMMITTEES

Five Subcommittees were formed: Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways and Corridors; Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach; the (Woodland) Duck Farm project, Habitat, and Mountains, Hills and Foothills. A synopsis of the issues discussed by each subcommittee follows.

1. Rivers, Tributaries, Corridors and Parkways

At their meeting on January 30, 2002 the Working Group established a Rivers and Tributaries Subcommittee, which was later renamed the Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways and Corridors Subcommittee (RTPC Subcommittee): to identify opportunities for acquisition or projects along the rivers and tributaries (including adjacent wetlands or estuaries) which are not currently planned.

The RTPC Subcommittee met on five occasions between February 15 and April 12 to discuss issues relative to development of a River Parkway Plan as identified in the OSP and make recommendations to the Board. The Subcommittee agreed at their initial meeting that it was important to identify opportunities for river related projects that could begin soon and in parallel with a more comprehensive planning effort. This agreement was based on the understanding that the RMC should demonstrate progress with early projects to educate the public about its mission while also developing a more long-range plan that helped support sound decisions for accomplishing that mission. The Subcommittee also agreed at one of their early meetings that it was important to acknowledge the RMC's guiding legislation which directed that priority be given to river related projects as excerpted below:

Whereas Section 32604 directed the conservancy shall do the following:

(a) Establish policies and priorities for the conservancy regarding the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River, and their watersheds, and conduct any necessary planning activities, in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32602.

(b) Give priority to river related projects that create expanded opportunities for recreation, greening, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat along the corridor of the river, and in parts of the river channel that can be improved for the above purposes without infringing on water quality, water supply, and necessary flood control;

As a result the Subcommittee directed the consultant team to develop the following products in support of this strategy:

- Begin working on a map showing existing and proposed projects.
- Develop draft criteria for strategizing which projects to pursue.
- Begin the scope of work for the Parkway Plan.
- Develop a draft recommendation from the Working Group to the RMC Board regarding funding allocations.

Following is a brief summary on each of the items:

■ Project Map

As of June 7, a project map has been created which delineates seventy-three projects either proposed or in process. The project information sources include Proposition A and Proposition 13 grant applications, Working Group members, and the Project Identification Forms sent to the cities. A list of the project locations is included below. The map shows the beginning of a river corridor forming along the lower Los Angeles River. (A larger scale map is included in the Appendix.)

■ Draft Criteria

The subcommittee agreed to recommend that the RMC Board modify their existing project evaluation criteria to give additional priority to river related projects during the next three years. The following criteria were developed and recommended as the basis for modifying the existing project evaluation criteria:

Location

- Is located adjacent to existing or proposed open space
- Visible and/or easily accessible to the public

Linkages

- Provides a direct physical linkage to other open space, trails, or bike paths.
- Fills in a gap along the river corridor between existing or proposed open space

Land Use

- For land that is publicly owned, the proposed use is consistent with current public functions (e.g., flood control, or recharge)
- Is proposed to occur on land that is currently underutilized

Readiness

- Project is either supported or requested by the underlying jurisdiction
- Project is well defined and can proceed expeditiously

Multiple Uses

- Project accomplishes multiple objectives consistent with the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan

Additionally, the Subcommittee developed specific definitions for unique terms such as “river related” project to provide more detailed guidance to the RMC Board and staff on how to apply the suggested revisions to the project selection criteria described above.

■ Scope of Work

The consultant team developed a draft outline for a future River Parkway Plan (included in Section IV.A above), which includes a specific series of tasks or next steps that was developed with input from the Subcommittee.

■ Develop Draft Recommendation

The RTPC Subcommittee of the Working Group spent the majority of its meetings discussing the advantages and disadvantages of (a) recommending river related projects be prioritized and (b) developing criteria for river related projects. A summary is included below:

Prioritize River Related Projects During Next Three Years

Advantages

RMC Legislation directs that river related projects should be given priority.

RMC would benefit from establishing a clear symbol to the public and outside funding sources of the mission of the RMC in its initial years of operation.

The RMC has a limited budget and it is important to focus these limited resources in the early years on actions consistent with its mission.

Failure to prioritize projects could dilute the limited RMC funds such that little impact would be made throughout the entire watershed.

River restoration projects throughout the Country have been successful when they focused their fiscal resources in their early years on demonstration projects that helped build public and private financial support.

The RMC has already developed project evaluation criteria, but those criteria don't give strategic importance to river related projects.

RMC would benefit from demonstrating to State and Federal funding sources that a strong consensus for the RMC's mission has been established among local agencies and community organizations throughout the RMC territory.

Disadvantages

Prioritization of river related projects may alienate or disenfranchise communities not located adjacent to the river.

May lose opportunities to acquire habitat and/or undeveloped areas not located on the river.

Setting RMC policy to prioritize river related projects may reduce flexibility of RMC to allocate funds in the future.

The Subcommittee concluded that the best approach for addressing the disadvantages was by recommending that the RMC Board strive to allocate a portion (60%) of the RMC's discretionary funding for river related projects. This would allow other projects to be funded to address the concerns described above. They also suggested that the recommendation be worded such that it provide the RMC Board and staff with flexibility.

The RTPC Subcommittee prepared a draft recommendation, which was adopted by the Working Group with minor changes at their May 31 meeting.

2. Project Technical Assistance/ Education and Outreach

The Project Technical Assistance Subcommittee was formed at the January 30, 2002, meeting of the Working Group, with an intent to (1) Assist in the organization of a project development workshop for Proposition 12 projects; (2) discuss the need for future workshops; and (3) to provide technical assistance in the development of Proposition 12 Grant Applications. The Subcommittee was later renamed the Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach Subcommittee.

Participants in the Subcommittee included: Candace David (representing Nick Conway, San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments), Deborah Chankan (representing Mike Egan, Gateway Cities Council of Governments), Joan Hartman (Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project), Jaqueline Lambrichts (Friends of the San Gabriel River), Joseph Perez (Solution Strategies), Carrie Sutkin (First District, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors), Don Wolfe (from Los Angeles County Public Works) and Melanie Winter (The River Project). Meeting facilitators included Belinda Faustinos (RMC Interim Executive Officer), Rebecca Drayse (TreePeople) Mark Horne (EIP Associates).

The Subcommittee first met on February 15. Ms. Faustinos explained that it would not be appropriate for the RMC to give direct technical assistance of Proposition 12 applications because the RMC would also participate in the ranking of applications. It was decided that the Subcommittee would focus on workshop development and not provide direct assistance for Proposition 12 projects. The desired number and potential location of workshops was discussed, including the pros and cons of having separate workshops for geographic areas. It was decided that because there are different timelines for Proposition 12 and Proposition 40, the RMC should plan for two types of workshops: one in April focused on river and tributary projects (which would be after release of the funding applications for Proposition 12—approximately mid-March), and a later workshop on wider watershed issues (e.g., prior to the availability of the RMC's Proposition 40 funding). The consultant team was asked to develop an agenda for the first workshop that the group could discuss in subsequent meetings. In addition, it was suggested that the RMC should conduct a call for projects, and requested that a Project Identification Form be developed.

At its March 8 meeting, the Subcommittee discussed the timing, audience, and logistics of the first workshop, which was scheduled for April 19, and the content of the Project Identification Form. The targeted audience for the workshop would be city representatives, community-based organizations, and non-profit groups. The workshop would begin with project opportunities including an overview of project types and information about the importance of multiple objective projects. A variety of success stories would be presented to inform the workshop participants. A brief overview of funding opportunities would then be discussed. The afternoon portion of the workshop would include discussion of the City Specific Appendix to *Common Ground*, with encouragement to complete the appendixes. The remainder of the day would focus on Proposition 12 funding and River and Tributary projects. The consultant team was asked to refine the agenda based on comments from the Subcommittee.

During the discussion of the Education and Outreach strategy at the March 8 meeting of the Working Group, it was suggested that an education framework be developed, and the subject referred to the Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach Subcommittee. The consultant team developed a draft framework, which was discussed, revised, and augmented by the Subcommittee at their meetings on March 22, April 12, and May 10, along with the development of the draft recommendations to the RMC

Board. The educational framework and recommendations regarding an education and outreach strategy were adopted by the Working Group with minor modifications at its May 31 meeting.

3. Duck Farm

At their meeting of December 14, 2001, the RMC Board adopted a resolution which found that purchase of the (Woodland) Duck Farm would be consistent with the purposes of the RMC and authorized the Executive Officer to initiate negotiations with representatives of the Trust for Public Land to determine the feasibility of acquiring the Duck Farm. To explore this extraordinary opportunity, the Duck Farm subcommittee was formed by the Working Group at their meeting on January 30, 2002, to consider the issues and opportunities presented by the prospective purchase by the RMC of the 57-acre Woodland Farms (Duck Farm) site along the San Gabriel River from the Trust for Public Land.

The subcommittee met four times, on February 12, March 6, March 21 and April 11, 2002. The March 6 meeting was preceded by a tour of the site. The subcommittee reached an early consensus at its first meeting that its role would not be to prepare a plan for the site, but rather to develop recommendations that the Working Group could pass on to the RMC Board to assist the Board in their future development of a plan.

Initially, the subcommittee members received briefings on the status of the proposed acquisition, and on the characteristics of the property. They learned that an appraisal is in preparation and the Attorney General is in the process of due diligence. They toured the site and reviewed maps, aerial photos and diagrams of the site and surrounding area.

The subcommittee identified stakeholders who will need to be involved in the planning process, and identified a number of opportunities for site development. The subcommittee also had two presentations from master of architecture students in the 606 Landscape Architecture Studio of Cal Poly Pomona, which was simultaneously studying the site and its surroundings.

Once the complexities of the site configuration and ownership, as well as other site development issues, became clear to the subcommittee, the group concluded that they did not have enough information to recommend purchasing the site, and that their recommendations would be conditional: given the RMC Board's announced intent to purchase the property. If RMC does decide to acquire the property (following the appropriate due diligence), the recommendations provide guidance about how to proceed.

A significant issue that arose at the first meeting and claimed the subcommittee's attention throughout was short-term management of the site, including interim security and prevention of vandalism. In general, the subcommittee concluded that it is important to implement a plan for maintenance and security, and to be sure that the responsible party, TPL at present, perhaps RMC later, follows through. The subcommittee recognized that the interim period between identification of a site and the start of construction for site development may be several years, and that, if the site is first acquired by a third party like TPL, RMC must communicate its criteria for interim management of the site.

The configuration and ownership of the site, of which 12 acres is on the east side of the 605 Freeway and 45 acres on the west, with the western portion divided into several parcels, not all contiguous, and with Southern California Edison parcels interspersed, was a concern. The utility easements over the proposed acquisition parcels were also an issue, as the easements specifically limit the uses of the site and require maintenance access for the four rows of electric power towers and lines that run through the site. The site is in two jurisdictions, the southern portion in the City of Industry and the northern portion in unincorporated Los Angeles County, which could add additional complexity to site planning.

Site access was another significant issue. There is no public access on the west side of the 605 Freeway. Access through a residential neighborhood south of Valley Boulevard leads to the eastern portion of the site, which is linked to the western portion via a tunnel under the freeway. North of Valley, there is an access point that leads, under the interchange of the freeway and Valley, to the far northern point of the site adjacent to the

river, but that access depends on other ownerships to connect to the site. As the public access issues were discussed, emergency vehicle access also emerged as a concern. Once the river-adjacent open space becomes a public space, fire and other emergency vehicles will likely need access. The tunnel may not be large enough for a fire truck. The northern entrance does accommodate trucks - it is where the trucks that service the present nursery tenant access the site - but a second means of emergency vehicle access may be needed.

Contamination of groundwater and soil was also understood to be a potentially significant issue. While an assessment of site toxics has been performed, the results were not available to the subcommittee, and the issue was not addressed in detail. It was noted that the existing wells onsite have been closed.

The subcommittee also addressed issues of RMC's role, if it acquires the property, concluding that RMC should plan and develop the site, and retain ownership of all or part of the property. Considering the fragmented ownership and the restrictions on development due to the existing easements, the subcommittee concluded that RMC might want the option of selling a portion of the property, perhaps using the proceeds for maintenance. The subcommittee also considered interim uses, like the existing nursery and billboards, as revenue generators.

The subcommittee considered possible uses for the site, concluding that active recreation, such as sports fields, is not appropriate, and proposing a menu of possible uses for evaluation during the planning phase.

The subcommittee recognized that to resolve many of the issues identified will require significant efforts of data collection, analysis and planning studies. Subcommittee members expressed the concern that, in the absence of this information, it is premature to recommend purchase of the site. Accordingly, the subcommittee, after discussion, adopted six recommendations to provide guidance to RMC, if RMC should decide to proceed with the purchase of the Duck Farm site.

4. Habitat

(Note: the following report was provided by Calvin R. Abe Associates.)

This report is the final product of the Habitat Subcommittee of the Working Group of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC). A number of Working Group Members, RMC Staff and Volunteers, and members of the public met six times with a consultant to discuss issues pertaining to habitat and wildlife within RMC territory. The Subcommittee meetings, which took place between March 6 and May 29, 2002, were between two and three hours long.

The original charge to the Subcommittee was to assist the RMC in the development of a Habitat Plan for RMC territory. The Subcommittee determined early on, that in addition to a habitat plan scope, the Subcommittee could also develop an inventory of potential resource partners that might assist the RMC with a comprehensive habitat plan, as well as begin the process of cataloging the vast, but widely scattered information potentially useful to RMC work pertaining to habitat.

During initial meetings of the Habitat Subcommittee, Members discussed general issues related to habitat, and habitat planning. Next, the Subcommittee studied different approaches to habitat planning, reviewed several other habitat conservation plans, and read critiques about habitat planning efforts. A matrix was developed identifying components of the habitat plans that had been studied, and the Subcommittee discussed which plan components would be applicable to an RMC Habitat Plan. Once plan components were identified, the Consultant to the Subcommittee began producing draft plan scopes, which were reviewed, discussed and revised.

In addition to a plan scope and the inventories of potential resource partners and other plans and studies, the Subcommittee also decided to develop recommendations to the RMC Board. The Subcommittee developed a total of three recommendations. The first Habitat Recommendation is a general policy recommendation for consideration of habitat issues in all RMC work. The second Habitat Recommendation is to take

immediate steps to commence a territory-wide RMC Habitat Plan. The third Habitat Recommendation is to establish a permanent Habitat and Science Advisory Panel to assist the RMC in the development and implementation of a Habitat Plan, and to inform RMC work with regard to habitat, wildlife and other natural resources decisions prior to completion of the Habitat Plan.

It should be noted at the onset, that the process followed by the Habitat Subcommittee was closely paralleled by the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee because the actively participating memberships of the Subcommittees were identical. Working Group Members most interested in habitat were also interested in the mountains and hills, where most RMC habitat is located. The result is that the reports from the Habitat and Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittees are similar in many respects. While acknowledging their similarities, both Subcommittees are adamant that neither planning effort is to be considered a substitute for the other. Both Subcommittees agree that an RMC Habitat Plan should precede an RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, with the advantage that many sections of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Inventory and Analysis section could draw directly from the Habitat Plan. The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan Scope presently includes significant habitat components in the event the RMC does not execute the Habitat Plan first. If indeed the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan is done first, a full territory-wide RMC Habitat Plan must still be developed, because many important habitat opportunities exist outside of the mountains and hills.

(The Subcommittee's recommendation regarding the importance of habitat and the scope of a subsequent habitat plan is provided in Section 3B below.)

5. Mountains, Hills, and Foothills

(Note: the following report was provided by Calvin R. Abe Associates.)

The report is the final product of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee of the Working Group of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC). A number of Working Group Members, RMC Staff and Volunteers, and members of the public met six times with a consultant to discuss issues pertaining to the hills and mountains within RMC territory. The Subcommittee meetings, which took place between March 8 and May 29, 2002, were between one and three hours long.

The original charge to the Subcommittee was to assist the RMC in the development of a Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan for the hills and mountains in RMC territory. This document would analyze and plan the unique resources abundant in the region's hills and mountains, which include the San Gabriel and Verdugo Mountains and Foothills, the San Jose and Montebello Hills and the Puente-Chino Hills complex.

The Subcommittee determined early on, that in addition to a Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan scope, the Subcommittee could also develop an inventory of potential resource partners that might assist the RMC with a comprehensive Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, as well as begin the process of cataloging the vast, but widely scattered information potentially useful to RMC work in the hills and mountains.

From the first meeting onward, the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee agreed that for RMC projects in the hills and mountains, highest priority should be given to habitat and wildlife issues. In fact, every Member of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee was also a Member of the Habitat Subcommittee. During the initial meetings of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee, Members discussed general issues related to habitat, wildlife, human impacts on natural resources and Mountains, Hills and Foothills Planning. Next, the Subcommittee studied different approaches to planning, reviewed several other plans with significant habitat conservation components, and read critiques about other planning efforts. A matrix was developed identifying components of the plans that had been studied, and the Subcommittee discussed which plan components would be applicable to an RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan. Once plan components were identified, the Consultant to the Subcommittee began producing draft plan scopes, which were reviewed, discussed and revised.

In addition to a plan scope and the inventories of potential resource partners and other plans and studies, the Subcommittee also decided to develop recommendations to the RMC Board. The Subcommittee developed two recommendations, a general policy recommendation for prioritization of projects located in the hills and mountains of RMC territory, and a second recommendation suggesting a percentage of discretionary funding to be allocated to projects located in the mountains, hills and foothills during the next three years.

It should be noted at the onset, that the process followed by the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee closely paralleled the process followed by the Habitat Subcommittee because the actively participating memberships of Subcommittees were identical. Working Group Members most interested in habitat were also interested in the mountains and hills, where most RMC habitat is located. The result is that the reports from the Habitat and Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittees are similar in many respects. While acknowledging their similarities, both Subcommittees are adamant that neither planning effort is to be considered a substitute for the other. Both Subcommittees agree that an RMC Habitat Plan should precede an RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, with the advantage that many sections of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Inventory and Analysis section could draw directly from the Habitat Plan. The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan Scope presently includes significant habitat components in the event the RMC does not execute the Habitat Plan first. If indeed the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan is done first, a full territory-wide RMC Habitat Plan must still be developed, because many important habitat opportunities exist outside of the mountains and hills.

(The Subcommittee's recommendation regarding the scope of a subsequent Mountains, Hills and Foothills plan is provided in Section 3C below.)

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group adopted seven recommendations to the RMC Board, which are presented on the following pages in the order they were adopted.

- Open Space Management
- Duck Farm
- Education and Outreach
- River-Related Projects
- Mountains, Hills and Foothills
- Long-Term Funding
- Habitat

The Working Group elected not address the scope of subsequent plans for Trails and Bike Paths, Cultural and Historic Landscapes, or Monitoring and Assessment, recommending instead that the subsequent plans for River Parkways, Habitat, and Mountains, Hills, & Foothills each include these elements within the scope of those plans. The scope of these subsequent plans is addressed in Section 6 above.

1. Open Space Management

Parkway and Open Space Plan Working Group

May 10, 2002

Recommendation to the RMC Board regarding an
Open Space Management Strategy

■ Recommended Strategies

To expand open space in the RMC territory:

- a) The RMC should facilitate acquisition of open space by others; to the extent the intended purpose is consistent with the RMC's mission
- b) Within the constraints of its enabling legislation and with the concurrence of the local jurisdiction, the RMC should pursue acquisition of open space and assume responsibility to plan projects consistent with the RMC's mission
- c) The RMC should develop staff capacity to assist in planning and development of open space projects consistent with the RMC's mission
- d) The RMC should seek assistance from other entities (e.g., those with experience in project development) to develop open space projects consistent with the RMC's mission
- e) The RMC should generally pass through ownership of open space projects to other entities that can provide for operations, maintenance, and security consistent with the RMC's mission
- f) The RMC where appropriate may retain ownership of open space projects and retain site control through partnerships or contracts with appropriate entities for operations, maintenance and security consistent with the RMC's mission"

Working Group Recommendation

The RMC should facilitate acquisition of open space by other entities, to the extent that the proposed use is consistent with the RMC's mission (as set forth in the enabling legislation). If the RMC elects to acquire open space, it must also assume responsibility to plan the site. The RMC should develop staff to assist in planning and development, and rely upon assistance of other entities to develop projects. Retaining ownership of open space projects should be limited to situations in which the RMC can identify resources that can fund operations, maintenance, and security by another entity.

Background

At their meetings of December 14, 2001 and January 11, 2002, the RMC Board approved establishment of a Working Group to research, identify, and make recommendations to the Board concerning five topics, including an Open Space Management Strategy for the RMC. The consultant team developed an Open Space Management Matrix, which described potential management models, a list of pros and cons for these models, and potential recommendations to the RMC Board, which were discussed with the Working Group on February 15, March 8, April 12, and May 10.

Open space management generally implies operations, maintenance, and security. However, the Working Group identified a range of activities that relate to the identification, acquisition, planning, development of open space that also warrant consideration. These various tasks and responsibilities are described below.

■ Tasks and Responsibilities

Identification

Prior to any decision about acquiring a property, RMC must identify the opportunity for a purchase from a willing seller or a transfer from another agency, since RMC does not have power of eminent domain. Candidate sites may be identified by means of a strategy that targets in advance properties that may become available, or by responding to opportunities as they arise. RMC must notify and coordinate with the underlying jurisdiction. Once a property is identified, RMC must decide whether to pursue the acquisition directly, to cooperate with another agency or nonprofit (as the conservancy is doing with the Trust for Public Land in the case of the Duck Farm), or to facilitate the acquisition by another agency, local, state or federal.

Acquisition

The acquisition process itself is complex, and requires a number of skills. RMC as an acquiring agency would either have to develop sufficient staff with these skills in-house, use the services of a sister agency, or contract for the necessary services with specialist consultants. Due diligence must be performed in connection with acquiring real estate. This involves obtaining maps, a survey, legal description, an appraisal, and analyzing the status of ownership, easements, restrictions, jurisdictions, liabilities and other considerations that may affect the viability of the site for public use and the cost of developing it. Due diligence on most river-adjacent sites and many other sites in RMC's territory will involve at least an initial assessment of soil and groundwater to establish the extent of contamination and cleanup costs and responsibilities. Most river-adjacent sites also serve as rights-of-way for power lines and other utilities. Those sites not owned by the utility companies are likely to have easements involving significant restrictions on the use of the sites. A business deal must be negotiated for the purchase, involving real estate acumen and legal skills. Funding must be secured and disbursed in a timely manner, and the acquisition agreement must be finalized and executed. Prior to closing the acquisition, RMC would need to assure that the seller's responsibilities, including toxics cleanup, have been accomplished.

Planning

If it decides to plan for the development of a property, RMC would need to develop a process for planning, including consultant selection, community participation, and coordination with local jurisdictions. RMC would need to manage the planning effort and give direction. Planning studies, including CEQA review and preparation of CEQA documentation as applicable, would need to be performed, either in-house or by consultant(s). A planning program—setting forth desired uses and design parameters—would need to be developed, mainly by RMC if it takes responsibility for planning, in cooperation with the communities to be served. Community participation and coordination with user groups and local jurisdictions will be required. A project-specific plan would need to be adopted by RMC.

Additional Remediation

Generally, remediation of site contamination is the responsibility of the seller, and as such it is part of the acquisition process. A seller of property zoned for industrial use and/or historically used for industrial purposes may be liable to clean the site only to industrial standards. To the extent that remediation to standards appropriate for the intended public use of the site has not been performed prior to acquisition, if it assumes some responsibility for cleanup, RMC would need to manage the remediation process, including assessment and cleanup of toxic soil and groundwater. RMC would need to contract with specialist consultants for assessment and remediation planning. RMC would need to contract for remediation work. RMC would need to obtain approvals from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, from the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the South Coast Regional Air Quality Control Board, for groundwater remediation, soil remediation, and air quality remediation as applicable, and for follow-up monitoring where necessary.

Development

If it assumes responsibility for the development and construction of a site, RMC would need to manage the process of design and construction, including consultant selection and project management. Assuming that the planning process has resulted in a general direction for development of the site, but not detailed construction drawings, RMC would need either to prepare in-house or contract with consultants such as landscape architects, civil engineers, architects, graphic designers and other specialists for design. RMC would need to coordinate approvals of the construction drawings with local or state jurisdictions as applicable. RMC would need to develop a bidding/contractor selection process. RMC would need to select a contractor, negotiate and execute a contract for construction, and manage the project through completion.

Retention of Ownership

Ownership is not just passively holding title. It implies managing all of the other responsibilities discussed below, either by developing the appropriate staff and skills in-house, or by contracting for them. If RMC retains ownership, using the services of a sister agency to address the responsibilities of ownership seems unlikely, since these responsibilities are extensive in time and staffing demands.

Operations

If it elects to operate a property, RMC would need to provide visitor services, including educational programs and coordination with other agencies and nonprofit organizations as appropriate. It would need to manage the property. It would need to assure that utilities such as water, sewer, power, and telephone are available as appropriate, and that lighting is provided for facilities used after dark.

Maintenance

To the extent that it retains maintenance responsibility, RMC would need to provide trash collection, toilet facilities and utilities maintenance, regular maintenance of buildings, grounds, and plantings, and periodic major maintenance of plantings and water features and such systems as biofiltration installations. RMC would either need to develop staff capability for maintenance, contract with another agency or with a private business to provide maintenance, or a combination.

Security and Public Safety

If it maintains ownership of a property, RMC would need to provide for public safety and security of property, both its own facilities and visitors' vehicles and personal effects. RMC may elect to contract with another agency or to develop staff to provide ranger services to visitors, including guidance and emergency assistance. RMC would also need to provide the appropriate level of fire protection services, most likely by contracting with a recognized firefighting agency such as the LA County Fire Department.

Liability

In general, state agencies are self-insured, backed by the full faith and credit of the State of California. In cases where RMC does not maintain ownership, the RMC will need to assure that liabilities are addressed.

■ Open Space Management Models

With the above list of tasks and responsibilities, a range of conceptual open space management models can be derived, which includes (1) facilitate acquisition by others; (2) acquire and pass through; (3) acquire, plan, and pass through; (4) acquire, plan, develop, and pass through; (4) acquire, own, and do not operate; (5) acquire, own, and partially manage; and (6) acquire, own, and manage. The tasks and responsibilities implied by each of these conceptual models is identified in the following matrix, which includes examples of agencies which employ that model, and key issues associated with each of these models.

Open Space (Acquisition, Ownership, Planning, Development, and) Management Models

		Identification	Acquisition	Planning	Additional Remediation, If Applies	Development	Retention of Ownership	Operations	Maintenance	Security and Public Safety	Liability	Example Agency or Organization that Uses this Model	Issues
	Open Space Management Options												
0	Facilitate Acquisition by Others											LASGWCncl	Minimal Control, Need New Owner
1	Acquire & Pass Through											TPL	Very Little Control, Need New Owner
2	Acquire, Plan, & Pass Through											Coastal Cnsvcy	Limited Control, Need New Owner
3	Acquire, Plan, Develop, & Pass											Coastal Cnsvcy	Need New Owner
4	Acquire, Own, & Do not Operate										?	LA County Beaches (State Parks)	Need Operating Agency, O&M Funding
5	Acquire, Own, & Partially Manage											Mtns Rest Trust	Need Security Agency, O&M Funding
6	Acquire, Own, & Manage											E Bay Reg OSD	Need O&M Funding, Staff

Abbreviations

Coastal Cnsvcy = California State Coastal Conservancy
 E Bay Reg OSD = East Bay Regional Open Space District
 LASGWCncl = Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council
 Mtns Rest Trust = Mountains Restoration Trust (Cold Creek)
 O&M = Operations and Maintenance
 TPL = Trust for Public Land

■ Pros and Cons of Conceptual Management Models

In addition to the issues identified in the matrix, a list of specific pros and cons for each of these models has been identified.

Model 0—Facilitate Acquisition by Others

- Pro: Requires least RMC staff development.
Requires no RMC funding for acquisition, planning, development, or operations.
- Con: Provides minimal control over planning, development, and operations.
Requires identification of an appropriate owner to fund, acquire, plan, develop and operate the site and provide security.

Model 1—Acquire & Pass Through

- Pro: Requires RMC staff development only of acquisition expertise.
Requires no RMC funding for planning, development, or operations.
- Con: Provides very little control over planning, development, and operations.
Requires identification of an appropriate owner to fund, acquire, plan, develop and operate the site and provide security.

Model 2—Acquire, Plan, & Pass Through

- Pro: Provides control over planning.
Requires no RMC funding for development or operations.
- Con: Requires RMC funding for acquisition and planning.
Requires identification of an appropriate owner to acquire, develop and operate the site and provide security.

Model 3—Acquire, Plan, Develop, & Pass Through

- Pro: Provides control over planning and development.
Requires no RMC staffing for operations.
- Con: Requires RMC funding for acquisition, planning, and development.
Requires identification of an appropriate owner to acquire and operate the site and provide security.

Model 4—Acquire, Own, & Do not Operate

- Pro: Provides control over planning and development.
Requires no RMC staffing for operations.
- Con: Requires RMC funding for acquisition, planning, and development.
Requires identification of an appropriate operating agency to manage the site and provide security, and funding for operations and security.

Model 5—Acquire, Own, & Partially Manage

- Pro: Provides control over planning, development, and operations.
Requires no RMC staffing for security.
- Con: Requires RMC funding for acquisition, planning and development and operations.
Requires RMC staffing for operations.

Requires identification of an appropriate security agency to provide security, and funding for security.

Model 6—Acquire, Own, & Manage

Pro: Provides control over planning, development, and operations.

Con: Requires RMC funding for acquisition, planning and development and operations.
Requires RMC staffing for operations and security.

■ **Conceptual Management Scenarios**

Given the pros and cons listed above, conceptual scenarios can be developed to suggest ways in which the RMC could provide flexibility for open space management (as conditions dictate), or could identify a specific long-term management strategy. These conceptual scenarios are presented in ascending order, with Scenario A calling for RMC to facilitate acquisition by other agencies where possible rather than acquire properties, and Scenario F, at the other extreme, calling for RMC to develop the resources and staff needed for operations, maintenance and security.

These alternative scenarios all incorporate some degree of flexibility to respond to particular conditions over time, and all recognize a difference between the immediate situation presented by the potential Duck Farm acquisition and future situations. Except for Recommendation A, the short-term component of each recommendation is identical. A range of options for owning and at least partially managing properties are included in Scenarios C, D and E. Scenario F defines a particular management strategy and suggests the need for transition plan to implement it.

Scenario A

In the short term, the RMC should be considered the owner and operator of last resort. The RMC Board should seek to identify appropriate agencies to assume ownership, planning, development, and operations responsibilities. Longer term, the Board should remain flexible, choosing among management models 0 to 3 on a case-by-case basis, and should minimize RMC's involvement in operations and security,

Scenario B

In the short term, RMC should consider acquisition, planning, and development of sites, but should identify other agencies to retain ownership and provide operations, maintenance, and security. Longer term, the Board should remain flexible, choosing among management models 0 to 3 on a case-by-case basis, and should minimize RMC's involvement in operations and security,

Scenario C

In the short term, RMC should consider acquisition, planning, and development of sites, but should identify other agencies to provide operations, maintenance, and security. Longer term, the Board should remain flexible, choosing among management models 0 to 4 on a case-by-case basis, and should minimize RMC's involvement in operations and security,

Scenario D

In the short term, RMC should consider acquisition, planning, and development of sites, but should identify other agencies to provide operations, maintenance, and security. Longer term, the Board should remain flexible, choosing among management models 0 to 5 on a case-by-case basis, gradually developing staff capabilities in the area of operations, but not developing a ranger force.

Scenario E

In the short term, RMC should consider acquisition, planning, and development of sites, but should identify other agencies to provide operations, maintenance, and security. Longer term, the Board should remain flexible, choosing among management models 0 to 6 on a case-by-case basis, gradually developing staff capabilities in the area of operations and a ranger force.

Scenario F

In the short term, RMC should consider acquisition, planning, and development of sites, but should identify other agencies to provide operations, maintenance, and security. Longer term, the Board should decide on a management model, either models 5 or 6, and adopt a timetable and a transition plan to develop the funding and staff required.

2. Duck Farm

Parkway and Open Space Plan Working Group

May 10, 2002

Recommendation to the RMC Board regarding the Woodland Farms (Duck Farm) Property

■ Recommendations

The RMC Board has expressed its intention to pursue acquisition of the Duck Farm site, subject to statutory requirements, funding availability, and performance of due diligence. Recognizing that the acquisition is a matter of considerable complexity, uncertainty, and constraints, the Working Group recommends—if RMC proceeds with the acquisition—as follows:

1. Provide for Short-Term Management of the Site

Recognizing that the proposed acquisition will not be completed for several months, the Working Group recommends that RMC coordinate immediately with the current owner, the Trust for Public Land (TPL), to assure that issues of public safety and security are addressed, including provision of electric power for lighting and water pumps, and continuing supervision of the property to minimize vandalism and assure security and protection of the site. The Working Group recommends that, during the interim period from acquisition to the completion of construction, RMC contract for utilities, maintenance, and security to address the same issues. The Working Group recommends that RMC evaluate, together with TPL, the feasibility of early demolition of some structures, excluding those that may be of value in the development of the site, to minimize the danger of fire and vandalism. To contribute to site security by maintaining activity onsite, the Working Group recommends that RMC consider interim uses of the site, including revenue-generating uses and limited public uses appropriate for the interim period.

Discussion: TPL has arranged for a caretaker, Mr. Steve Musick, and he and his assistant have improved the security of the site. There is presently no electric service, and, since the water supply is pumped from a well, no water. TPL is presently responsible for the site, so coordination with them is essential to maintain site security and public safety. The process of planning, design, remediation, and construction will likely last several years. RMC will be responsible for maintenance and security once it acquires the property. Prior to site development, with no public access, maintenance and security needs are minimal, but nonetheless critical. Contracting for the appropriate services during the interim period seems the most straightforward way to address the needs. Once the general outlines of a plan have been developed, interim public uses can be implemented onsite, assuming such uses would not conflict with cleanup and construction requirements. Existing revenue-generating uses onsite can be maintained and perhaps augmented. Once a site development schedule has been developed, RMC will be able to negotiate leases and other revenue-generating arrangements consistent with the implementation of a site development plan.

2. Plan and Implement Development of the Woodland Farms Property

The Working Group recommends that the RMC assume responsibility for the planning and development of the site, including contracting as necessary for planning, design, and related services. The Working Group recommends that RMC work cooperatively with adjacent landowners including Cal Trans, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, and the City of Industry to plan for the site area as a whole. The Working Group recommends that RMC work cooperatively with the two utility companies that have easements across the property and ownership of adjacent parcels, Southern California Edison (SCE) and the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP), to

assure an integrated plan for the site area as a whole, and that RMC enter into agreements as necessary with the utilities to implement the plan. The Working Group recommends that the planning process include participation of stakeholders, including local, regional, state, and federal agencies and elected officials, community and environmental organizations, educational institutions, owners of adjacent properties, and interested businesses.

Discussion: The site consists of a number of parcels, not all contiguous. There are several parcels on both sides of the 605 Freeway, there are four rows of power transmission lines through the site, three SCE and one DWP, and SCE owns three parcels within the site area, including about half of the river frontage between Valley Boulevard and San Jose Creek. Part of the site area lies within the City of Industry part within the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County. Caltrans and the City of Industry both own parcels within the overall site area. Planning the site will require forming partnerships and working with a diverse group of interests. While RMC does not have staff to conduct the planning process in-house, it is well positioned to coordinate the effort and assure that the outcome is a site development consistent with its objectives.

3. Exclude Active Recreational Facilities from the Plan for the Site

Recognizing that there are nearby schools and County parks with extensive sports facilities, the Working Group recommends that RMC exclude active recreational facilities, such as sports fields, from its plan for the site.

Discussion: The site area and its linear and fragmented configuration, together with the presence of the utility towers, limit its ability to accommodate active recreation. Additionally, active recreation is not included within RMC's mission. Active recreational needs are being met by nearby existing facilities.

4. Include Multiple Uses in the Plan for the Site

The Working Group recommends that RMC evaluate the following uses in its plan for the site:

- Habitat Restoration
- Low-Impact, Passive Recreation
- Bicycle Trail(s)
- Hiking Trail(s)
- Equestrian Trail(s) and Facilities
- Education and Interpretation
- Flood Mitigation
- Groundwater Recharge
- Groundwater Treatment
- Surface Water Treatment

Discussion: The uses listed are a menu of all uses that have been suggested during the two Duck Farm Subcommittee meetings to date, for review and selection by the Subcommittee. The word "include" in the first sentence of the recommendation could be replaced with the word "evaluate", implying that the final menu of uses would result from analysis and review during the participatory planning process.

5. Retain Ownership of All or Part of the Woodland Farms Property

To the extent that the property can be developed and operated for public benefits consistent with RMC's objectives, the Working Group recommends that the RMC retain ownership of all or part of the property at least through the planning and development process. The Working Group further recommends that the RMC consider options of joint ownership with other entities.

Discussion: Retaining ownership provides control and maintains flexibility. Acquisition is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act review; site planning will trigger it. The planning and environmental review processes can move ahead while the RMC explores partnerships and long term uses for the site.

6. Provide for Long-Term Management of the Site

The RMC does not presently have maintenance or security staff, and it is not feasible for the conservancy to develop staff capability within the next few years. The Working Group recommends that, during the planning process, the RMC identify an appropriate entity or entities to assume management and/or ownership and form a partnership and/or contract with the entity or entities to provide ongoing maintenance, visitor services, and security for the property when it opens to the public.

Discussion: RMC is not in the park management business, and not likely to develop such capability soon, even if it should decide to pursue that direction in future. Maintenance, visitor services, public safety and fire protection each require specific capabilities, and each incurs costs. RMC will need to make arrangements to provide these services, perhaps by means of an operating agreement with a single agency or perhaps by means of separate arrangements with agencies and/or contractors to provide the services. The interim period from acquisition to completion of construction will allow ample time to explore the potential partnerships or contractual relationships and to pursue funding options.

■ Recommendation not Adopted

Acquire the Woodland Farms Property

To take advantage of an extraordinary opportunity to protect and restore river-adjacent land, to assure that the planning and development of the property for public benefit is consistent with RMC's objectives, and to maintain flexibility in the planning and development process, the Working Group recommends that the RMC acquire the property, subject to performance of due diligence to assure that the acquisition costs are consistent with fair market value, and that RMC is not exposed to unknown liability for future toxics cleanup of the site.

Discussion: RMC's enabling legislation authorizes the conservancy "to acquire and manage public lands." While it generally defines the purposes for which RMC may acquire land, the legislation does not specify the planning process. Due diligence, in accordance with standard State of California procedures for acquisition of property must be performed, including obtaining and reviewing an independent appraisal. It is important that the extent of toxic contamination and the responsibility for cleanup to appropriate levels be determined. It is particularly important that RMC have good information about the potential costs for any cleanup, to levels beyond what the seller will provide, which it may have to perform in order for the property to be used for public benefit.

3. Education and Outreach

Parkway and Open Space Plan Working Group

May 31, 2002

Recommendation to the RMC Board regarding an
Education and Outreach Strategy

■ Recommended Strategies

The working group recommends that the RMC:

- Priority Goal #1: Use Projects as Educational Tools
 - Give priority to projects with strong education and outreach components.
 - Use future Project Development Workshops to provide information on how education and outreach should be incorporated into projects.
 - Identify strategic partners and work to develop and issue guidelines for inclusion of education and outreach elements in projects.
 - Promote inclusion of nearby academic institutions (from K-12 to Universities) in project planning.
 - Include permanent educational signage at project sites to highlight watershed components, connectivity to other projects, and cultural and historical information.
- Priority Goal #2: Increase Awareness of the RMC and the Importance of Watershed Planning
 - Conduct a subsequent Project Development Workshop focused on Proposition 40 funding and watershed-wide projects.
 - Conduct additional future workshops in partnership with other agencies, particularly in urban neighborhoods.
 - Develop an RMC logo for use on RMC printed materials, the RMC website, and banners or signage for all projects funded by the RMC
 - Develop a homeowner brochure explaining the RMC's mission and the importance of watershed management and planning.
- Priority #3: Communicate the Value of Multi-Objective Projects
 - Use Project Development Workshops in partnership with other agencies and groups to provide technical assistance.
 - Partner with other agencies and groups to develop and promote guidelines for multi-objective projects
 - Provide information about, and links to, examples of successful multi-objective projects available on RMC website.

Other Goals

- Promote Watershed-Compatible Landscaping
 - Partner with groups and agencies (included in the educational framework) to develop and issue guidelines concerning appropriate plant materials and landscaping practices.
 - Provide information about, and links to, landscaping resources and practices on the RMC website.
- Promote the Importance of Citizen Monitoring

- RMC should facilitate partnerships with organizations (listed in the framework) to promote uniform monitoring protocols and information sharing between groups.
- Expand Watershed Education for Elementary School Children
 - Promote partnerships and resource sharing between groups with existing programs.
 - Include age-appropriate educational signage and interactive displays at RMC project sites.
 - If allowed by the funding source, earmark a percentage of funds for development of educational programs by project proponents.
- Connect Potential Funders with Projects
 - Support partnerships between entities facing mitigation requirements and cities or agencies seeking funding for multi-objective projects.

Working Group Recommendation

The RMC should (1) use projects as educational tools, and give priority to projects with strong education and outreach components; (2) build awareness of the RMC and the importance of watershed planning; (3) communicate the value of multi-objective projects; (4) promote watershed-compliant landscaping; (5) facilitate partnerships with organizations to promote uniform monitoring protocols for citizen monitoring programs; and (6) support partnerships between entities facing mitigation requirements and cities or agencies seeking funding for multi-objective projects.

Background

At their meetings of December 14, 2001, and January 11, 2002, the RMC Board approved establishment of a Working Group to research, identify, and make recommendations to the Board concerning five topics, including an Education and Outreach Strategy for the RMC. The consultant team developed an Education and Outreach background paper and facilitated a discussion with the Working Group on March 8, 2002, at which it was suggested that an education framework be developed, and the subject referred to the Project Technical Assistance/Education and Outreach Subcommittee. The consultant team developed a draft matrix, which was discussed by the subcommittee at meetings on March 22, April 12, and May 10 along with draft recommendations.

Common Ground emphasized that a high priority must be placed upon public education and outreach. Community leaders, agencies, property owners, industries, businesses, and individuals make day-to-day decisions that impact the watersheds. Restoration of the watershed will require changes in behavior, shifts in resource priorities, and decisions on how to balance environmental and economic needs. This requires local understanding of the key issues to allow the public, agencies, and policymakers to make informed choices.

The Working Group acknowledged that the RMC has limited staff capacity and resources to allocate to the important task of education. The Working Group recognized the RMC's need to define education priorities and form partnerships with other groups to implement the RMC's educational goals. The Project Technical Assistance and Education and Outreach Subcommittee was given the task of determining priorities, defining implementation strategies and identifying potential partners. The attached Education Framework and the recommendations are the work product of this subcommittee.

■ **EDUCATION FRAMEWORK**

The attached framework is designed as a guide for the RMC in designing its education program. The first column identifies the educational goal, or what we want our audience to learn. The second column indicates what audience(s) we are trying to reach. The third column recommends the type of programs or outreach materials that would be most efficient and useful in reaching the desired audience. The fourth column provides examples of successful, environmentally responsible watershed projects or programs. The final column defines an implementation strategy, or suggested next steps for the RMC. The framework was

designed to reach as many audiences as possible through strategic partnerships. The goals or educational outcomes are listed in descending order of recommended priority for the RMC with most immediate concerns listed first.

Within each educational goal, the implementation strategies believed simplest to accomplish without additional RMC staff or resources are listed first. The framework is designed as a living document. As additional partners, resources, or successful examples are identified, they should be added to the framework. The programs or strategies suggested in the framework should be evaluated for effectiveness with necessary course corrections made.

San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Education Framework

<i>Goal/Educational Outcome</i>	<i>The Audience</i>	<i>Recommended Type of Program: Curriculum, Outreach, PSAs, Direct Mail, Newspaper etc.</i>	<i>Examples of Implemented Projects or Programs</i>	<i>RMC Implementation Strategy</i>
Use projects as educational tools	All	Public participation in the selection and design of RMC projects. Permanent educational signage at project sites to highlight watershed components, connectivity, and cultural and historical information. Takeaway educational brochures explaining project elements (habitat enhancement, native plant use, water BMPs, etc.). Docent-led tours of sites, Press conferences, and other publicity. Newsletter, kiosks.	Santa Monica SMURRF facility, Tillman reclamation plant Japanese Gardens, Chino Basin WCD demonstration gardens, Broadous Elementary School, The River Project's Valleyheart Greenway, El Bosque del Rio Hondo Kiosk, Whittier Narrows Nature Center, El Dorado Nature Center, Monrovia Canyon; Santa Fe Dam Visitors Center, LA River Center, Upper Newport Bay Ecological Reserve; Augustus Hawkins Natural Park, Friends of the San Gabriel River—Thienes Avenue River Access to San Gabriel River and Garvey Avenue Pocket Park, San Gabriel Mountains Regional Conservancy and its planned watershed education center..	RMC Priority: RMC to issue guidelines for educational component in projects, and will favor projects with strong educational components. RMC will identify other partners including LA County and City Rec and Parks, State Parks and NPS. RMC will coordinate with academic institutions in promoting projects as educational tools (example Studio 606). RMC will include information about how to incorporate educational elements into projects as a component of future workshops.
Increase awareness of the RMC and the importance of watershed planning.	General Public, Agencies and Policy Makers	PSAs, workshops, articles in community newspapers and newsletters, informational banners with branding logo on signs and relevant signs (parks, river crossings, etc) throughout the watershed; local, call-in radio show interviews of park planners, mailings, homeowner brochures	Watershed Council, Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP), TreePeople, N.E. Trees. City and County of LA pollution prevention education materials, LADPW, Watershed Management Division, Aquatic Outreach Institute in Bay area, Friend of the San Gabriel River, The River Project, LA River Master Plan, State Parks Dept.	RMC Priority: RMC to Partner with the LA and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, and LA County DPW. RMC will conduct additional workshops with some to be held in urban neighborhoods. RMC will develop homeowner brochure.
Communicate importance of multi-objective projects and need to identify linkages in project planning	City and County Parks and Recreation Staff, Planning Staff, Community Organizations, Non-Profits, Agencies	City Appendix, Multi-agency Workshops, Website postings of RMC projects in pipeline and materials or links to examples multi-purpose projects already completed.	Northeast Trees, County Public Works Watershed Management Division, DWP Sustainable Schools Program, The River Project, NRDC Stormwater Strategies Case Studies, TreePeople	RMC Priority: RMC to provide technical assistance for project development in the form of workshops and make information about multi-objective projects available on RMC website. RMC to develop guidelines for multi-objective partners with the assistance of partners.
Promote watershed compatible landscaping: including how to: mulch, and design runoff infiltrating gardens. Teach appropriate species planting including removal of invasive non-native species. Provide information on pollution prevention BMPs.	General Public, Business Owners City and County Recreation & Parks and Landscape and Maintenance Staff, Planning Departments, Non-profits, Building Industry, Community-based organizations, Public Agencies	Manual, Workshop, Mailings, regular updates on plant palettes used in new projects available on RMC web site – including requests for suggestions. Curriculum for landscape students as future planners.	Theodore Payne Foundation, Native Plant Society, TreePeople, DWP Water-wise materials; FOLAR; The River Project; Northeast Trees, LA Conservation Corp, Friends of San Gabriel River, Los Angeles Agricultural Commission, Weed Management Area.	RMC to partner with other groups (e.g. MWD, LADWP, Watershed Council and non-profit groups), to develop guidelines and will include general information and links to groups on RMC Website.

San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Education Framework

<i>Goal/Educational Outcome</i>	<i>The Audience</i>	<i>Recommended Type of Program: Curriculum, Outreach, PSAs, Direct Mail, Newspaper etc.</i>	<i>Examples of Implemented Projects or Programs</i>	<i>RMC Implementation Strategy</i>
Teach importance of citizen monitoring. Educate about levels, sources, and impacts of pollution on river ecosystems.	General Public, Agencies	Outreach efforts to promote the programs and secure volunteers. Training Workshops on proper monitoring techniques. Coordinate with the State Water Resource Control Board – Clean Water Team, Regional Water Quality Control Board, signage at riverside parks and restoration projects.	Friends of San Gabriel River, Friends of the Los Angeles River, SCWRP, Regional Water Quality Control Board; Orange County Coast Keeper, Surfrider Foundation, Baykeeper, Heal the Bay	RMC to partner with State Water Resources Control Board – Clean Water Team, Regional Water Quality Control Board, SCWRP, Friends of San Gabriel River, and Friends of the Los Angeles River.
Increase awareness of: What is a watershed, what watershed do I live in, how does it function, how can I help it, who else lives in my watershed (flora and fauna), how can I help them or hurt them, what is an aquifer?	Elementary School Children	Age appropriate educational signage at watershed restoration projects including schools, and park projects. School curriculum, presentations, field trips that illustrate principles, problems and solutions offered by new park projects, school yard exercises, tree planting or habitat restoration activities, project-specific study materials in print and on web site that request students' input for design solutions; poster and essay contests; 'speakers bureau' in which students present info to other classrooms	TreePeople has created and received State certification for an award-winning urban watershed curriculum called "School Yard Explorers" that enables students to use science and math skills to analyze their campus watershed, prescribe, plan and execute a campus restoration. CREEC-LA network provides educational resources and networking opportunities for educators around Southern California. The Wetlands Recovery Project provides similar information sharing and networking opportunities. Additional resources include: The Globe program, the Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN), the EcoAcademy (of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps), the North American Association of Environmental Educators (NAAEE), the US EPA's Water Office Kid's Page, and the Water Education for Teachers project.	RMC to facilitate partnerships between groups who have existing programs. RMC will include educational signage and interactive displays at RMC funded project sites. In the future, RMC could fund others to develop programs by earmarking a % of funds for educational programs
To connect those who have projects but little or no funding with other partners who may need to set aside land for mitigation measures	Building Industry, Land Owners, Agencies, Community	Project planning workshops or other forums to connect parties.	Legacy Partners	RMC to support partnerships between entities facing mitigation requirements and cities or agencies seeking funding for multi-objective projects.

4. River-Related Projects

Parkway and Open Space Working Group

May 31, 2002

Recommendation to the RMC Board Regarding
Allocation of Discretionary Funds for River Related Projects

■ Requested Actions

The Working Group recommends:

1. For the next three years, the RMC Board reserve a majority of discretionary capital funds for river-related projects as the most effective manner of focusing project development in a manner that will create a clear identify for the Conservancy, develop a unified work plan, create a visible and accessible parkway, initiate a series of demonstration projects, and meet the intent of the enabling legislation
2. For the next three years, the RMC Board strive to allocate at least 60 percent of its available discretionary funds to river related projects recognizing that other key opportunities may take precedence in any given year.
3. RMC Board direct staff to develop guidelines that recognize the importance of the following types of river-related projects: Strategic River Parkway Projects, Geographically Distributed River Parkway Projects, and Opportunity Projects.
4. RMC Board direct staff to recommend modification of existing RMC project evaluation criteria to give additional priority to river related projects.

Working Group Recommendation

Because of the size and complexity of the RMC territory and the magnitude of open space, habitat and watershed restoration needs, the Working Group recommends that the RMC Board consider initially focusing the Conservancy's discretionary capital funds in a manner that establishes a clear identity for the RMC. As the enabling legislation [PRC Code Section 32605(b)] requires that the RMC "[g]ive priority to river related projects that create expanded opportunities for recreation, greening, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat along the corridor of the river..." the Working Group recommends that the RMC Board reserve a majority of discretionary capital funds for the next three years for river-related projects as the most effective manner of focusing project development in a manner that will create a clear identify for the Conservancy, develop a unified work plan, create a visible and accessible parkway, initiate a series of demonstration projects, and meet the intent of the enabling legislation.

Background

The RMC Board established at their meeting on January 11, 2002 a Working Group to discuss issues, refine concepts, identify options, and forward recommendations to the Board on how to implement the strategies and subsequent plans identified in the RMC's planning document: "San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan (OSP)." The Working Group subsequently established at their meeting on January 30, 2002 a Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways and Corridors Subcommittee (RTPC Subcommittee): to identify opportunities for acquisition or projects along the rivers and tributaries which are not currently planned.

The RTPC Subcommittee met on five occasions between February 15 and April 12 to discuss issues relative to development of a River Parkway Plan as identified in the OSP and make recommendations to the Board. The Subcommittee agreed at their initial meeting that it was important to identify opportunities for river

related projects that could begin soon and in parallel with a more comprehensive planning effort. This agreement was based on the understanding that the RMC should demonstrate progress with early projects to educate the public about its mission while also developing a more long-range plan that helped support sound decisions for accomplishing that mission. The Subcommittee also agreed at one of their early meetings that it was important to acknowledge the RMC's guiding legislation which directed that priority be given to river related projects as excerpted below:

Whereas Section 32604 directed the conservancy shall do the following:

- (a) Establish policies and priorities for the conservancy regarding the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River, and their watersheds, and conduct any necessary planning activities, in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32602.
- (b) Give priority to river related projects that create expanded opportunities for recreation, greening, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat along the corridor of the river, and in parts of the river channel that can be improved for the above purposes without infringing on water quality, water supply, and necessary flood control...

The Subcommittee also agreed it would be helpful to provide guidance to the RMC Board about the scope and content of a River Parkway Plan, as well as begin to provide tools for future progress in implementation of a River Parkway. As a result the Subcommittee directed the consultant team to

- 1). Suggest modification of existing RMC project evaluation criteria to give additional priority to river related projects,
- 2). Provide definitions of the key terms used in this recommendation and the project evaluation criteria,
- 3). Develop the proposed recommendation on reserving a portion of capital funds for river-related projects,
- 4). Prepare a map which delineated existing and proposed projects along the river, and
- 5). Develop a draft outline of a River Parkway Plan and a draft scope of work that would identify important "next steps."

Draft evaluation criteria and definitions follow, as well as a summary of the Subcommittee's discussion leading to the proposed recommendation. The map and scope of work for the River Parkway Plan will be included in the final work products submitted by the consultant team to the RMC Board (as part of the Phase II Open Space Plan contract).

Draft Evaluation Criteria

The requested actions of the RMC Board include a recommendation that the Board direct staff to modify existing RMC project evaluation criteria to give additional priority to river related projects during the next three years. The following criteria have been developed by the Working Group, and are recommended as the basis for modifying the existing criteria:

Location

- Is located adjacent to existing or proposed open space
- Visible and/or easily accessible to the public

Linkages

- Provides a direct physical linkage to other open space, trails, or bike paths.
- Fills in a gap along the river corridor between existing or proposed open space

Land Use

- For land that is publicly owned, the proposed use is consistent with current public functions (e.g., flood control, or recharge)
- Is proposed to occur on land that is currently underutilized

Readiness

- Project is either supported or requested by the underlying jurisdiction
- Project is well defined and can proceed expeditiously

Multiple Uses

- Project accomplishes multiple objectives consistent with the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan

Definitions

The Working Group recognizes that the requested actions rely upon various terms that require definition. The following draft definitions are suggested for inclusion in any draft project guidelines or supplemental project evaluation criteria:

River Related Project: Projects that create expanded opportunities for recreation, greening, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat along the urbanized portion of the corridor of the river and/or its tributaries (i.e. adjacent to or within ¼-mile of the river or its open channel tributaries), and in parts of the river or tributary channel that can be improved for the above purposes without infringing, and where possible, improving on water quality, water supply, and necessary flood protection.

Strategic River Parkway Project: River related projects along the corridor of the main stem only of the San Gabriel, Lower Los Angeles River, or Rio Hondo which are consistent with the RMC's legislation to give priority to: "...river related projects...along the corridor of the river..."

Geographically Distributed Projects: River related projects that would provide equitable distribution of projects geographically throughout the entire length of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and their tributaries.

Opportunity Projects: River related projects that may occur as opportunities during the normal fiscal year, which require quick response.

Open Space: Areas designated Open Space provide recreational opportunities, preservation of scenic and environmental values, protection of resources (water reclamation and conservation), protection of public safety and preservation of animal life. This designation also includes lands which may have been restricted to open space by map restriction, deed (dedication, condition, covenant and/or restriction), by an Open Space Easement pursuant to California Government Code Section 51070 *et seq.* and Section 64499 *et seq.*

Link: A link or linkage is any open space that creates a physical connection between two or more parcels of open space.

City: City, or for unincorporated areas, County

Because the RTPC Subcommittee of the Working Group recognizes the potential for concerns about the value of recommending river related projects be prioritized and developing criteria for river related projects, a summary of the potential advantages and disadvantages is provided below:

Prioritize River Related Projects During Next Three Years**Advantages**

- RMC Legislation directs that river related projects should be given priority.
- RMC would benefit from establishing a clear symbol to the public and outside funding sources of the mission of the RMC in its initial years of operation.
- The RMC has a limited budget and it is important to focus these limited resources in the early years on actions consistent with its mission.
- Failure to prioritize projects could dilute the limited RMC funds such that little impact would be made throughout the entire watershed.
- River restoration projects throughout the country have been successful when they focused their fiscal resources in their early years on demonstration projects that helped build public and private financial support.
- RMC would benefit from demonstrating to State and federal funding sources that a strong consensus for the RMC's mission has been established among local agencies and community organizations throughout the RMC territory.
- The RMC has already developed project evaluation criteria, but those criteria don't give strategic importance to river related projects.

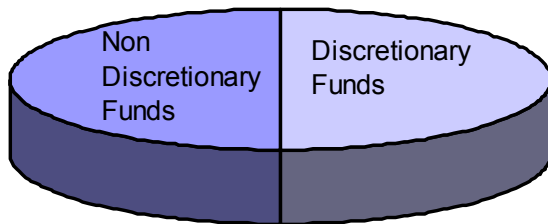
Disadvantages

- Prioritization of river related projects may alienate or disenfranchise communities not located adjacent to the river.
- May lose opportunities to acquire habitat and/or undeveloped areas not located on the river.
- Setting RMC policy to prioritize river-related projects may reduce flexibility of RMC to allocate funds in the future.

The Subcommittee concluded that the best approach for addressing the disadvantages was by recommending that the RMC Board strive to allocate only a portion (60 percent) of the RMC's discretionary funding for river related projects (see figure below). This would allow other projects to be funded to address the concerns described above. They also suggested that the budget for river related projects be divided into three distinct categories for the following reasons:

- **Strategic River Parkway Projects:** These projects would focus attention on the main stem of the San Gabriel, Lower Los Angeles, and Rio Hondo Rivers and help establish a clear identity for the RMC in its initial years of operation.
- **Geographically Distributed Projects:** The Subcommittee agreed that it was important to designate a portion of the discretionary funds for projects to allow for equitable distribution of projects throughout the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and their tributaries.
- **Opportunity Projects:** The Subcommittee also agreed that reserving a portion of the discretionary budget for unforeseen opportunities would provide the RMC with flexibility with respect to funding decisions.

RMC Conceptual Budget



**60 - 75 % of Discretionary Funds Allocated
for River Related Projects**

5. Mountains, Hills, and Foothills

Parkway and Open Space Working Group

May 31, 2002

Allocation of Discretionary Funds
for Mountains, Hills, and Foothills

■ Requested Actions

1. The RMC Board reserve a substantial portion of discretionary capital funds for the next three years for projects in the mountains, hills and foothills which contain critical habitats and serve as the headwaters of the watershed, affecting water supply, flood management, and water quality.
2. The RMC Board strive to allocate 40 percent of its discretionary expenditures, in the first three years, on planning and projects located within the mountains, hills and foothills, recognizing that other key opportunities may take precedence in any given year.

Background

The Working Group believes that this is necessary and appropriate because

- Most of RMC's existing native habitat and wildlife are located in the mountains and hills situated throughout RMC territory
- Most of the current destruction of natural resources within RMC territory takes place in the mountains and hills
- Habitat in the mountains and hills is usually easier to link to larger habitat patches and core wildlife populations than in other areas in RMC territory
- Many of RMC's opportunities for passive recreation and natural resources education exist in the mountains and hills
- Generally, preservation of quality habitat is more cost effective and successful than habitat restoration attempts
- Quality habitat areas and open space located in RMC mountains and hills can be acquired and opened to the public almost immediately
- The open space visible in the region's mountains and hills are critical to regional viewsheds, sense of place and quality of life

The Working Group believes that it is critical that RMC work focus on the big picture and all that can be accomplished across a broad territory, such as creation of critical linkages between significant habitat areas. The Working Group observes that many of the projects with the greatest potential to provide quality habitat for wildlife and for passive recreation and education will be conservation projects located in the hills and mountains scattered throughout RMC territory.

The Working Group further recommends that RMC activities in the mountains and hills emphasize habitat and wildlife considerations in coordination with the RMC mission and other goals, including watershed management. The Working Group recommends that public access as well as educational and recreational amenities be included in RMC projects located in the mountains and hills wherever their sensitive inclusion will not reduce the habitat and wildlife potential of these or surrounding areas.

6. Long-Term Funding

Parkway and Open Space Plan Working Group

May 31, 2002

Recommendations to the RMC Board
Regarding Long-Term Funding Strategy

■ Recommended Actions

1. Obtain Legislative Authorization to Fund Core Operations

In the near term, the Working Group recommends that the RMC Board actively pursue efforts to inform and educate state and federal legislators about the Conservancy's mission, status and operational funding needs, including authorization of basic personnel positions and appropriate consultant services. The Legislature created the RMC with a clear mission and should be encouraged to provide the funding necessary for the RMC to operate in support of that mission.

2. Pursue Partnerships with Appropriate Agencies/Organizations

Recognizing that there are a number of federal, state, regional, local agencies and organizations which either have funding for open space projects or may be eligible for such funding, that some such funding requires matching funds, and that many of these same entities are anticipating substantial capital program investments in connection with regulatory compliance, such as for Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements, the Working Group recommends that the RMC actively pursue partnership opportunities, both traditional and innovative, with appropriate agencies and organizations throughout its territory.

3. Facilitate Formation of a Regional Caucus

To pursue major capital projects and operating funds over the long term, the Working Group recommends that RMC facilitate the formation of a regional legislative caucus. Beginning with those state and federal legislators already familiar with the RMC and its mission and the open space needs of the region, the caucus could grow to include all of the relevant Southern California legislators. The Working Group recommends that RMC Board and staff members initiate a series of meetings and briefings with legislators and their senior staff to familiarize them with the issues and cooperative opportunities and explore future program, project, and funding options.

4. Strengthen RMC's Role in Grants Programs

To implement RMC's mission within existing and projected grant programs, the Working Group recommends that the RMC Board seek legislative and administrative opportunities for the Conservancy to act as the granting agency for state and federal funding for such programs.

5. Identify Funding Options for Operations and Maintenance of RMC Properties

Recognizing that RMC will need to provide funding support for operations and maintenance of any properties it acquires, although the operations and maintenance tasks may be performed by other agencies or contractors, the Working Group recommends that RMC identify sources of funding, such as leases, concessions or easements, sales of portions of acquired properties, formation of a nonprofit support group which could develop an endowment fund, and legislative efforts to include operations and maintenance funding in future capital programs.

6. Develop a Strategy to Create a Stable Long-Term Revenue Stream

To develop stable long term sources of funding for both capital and operating needs, the Working Group recommends that the RMC develop, working with regional partners, a strategy to seek, at a future date, voter authorization of a regional or local revenue generation measure(s) to support ongoing capital and operating funds for open space. Recognizing that state and private funding may not be forthcoming, that there are models and precedents for voter approved local and regional funding of open space and that there exist a variety of entities in and near the RMC territory with open space needs who may be natural partners in such a cooperative undertaking, the Working Group recommends that the RMC develop a strategy that includes a review of relevant models, fostering partnerships and alliances, public outreach, coordination with elected officials, and evaluation of the process and timing for such revenue generation measure(s).

■ Background and Discussion

Definition

Long-Term can be defined as the period from two to twenty years from now. This implies some attention to the RMC's Proposition 40 funding (which is anticipated to be allocated over the next four years), in addition to Proposition 40 funds that are not specifically targeted to RMC, but the main focus is post-Proposition 40 strategy.

Context

RMC's enabling legislation (Public Resources Code 32602) identifies the purposes of the RMC to include acquisition and management of public lands, but it does not provide long-term funding to support these purposes. *Common Ground* acknowledged that additional financial resources will be needed to restore the watersheds, for natural resource protection and acquisition and maintenance of open space.

Excerpt from Common Ground: Funding

To restore the watersheds, additional financial resources will be needed. Traditionally, government has identified and funded acquisition of open space and other natural resource protection and conservation activities. Increasingly, cities, communities, residents, neighborhood groups, private groups, and environmental organizations identify open space and conservation opportunities and work to secure funding or find alternative solutions within and outside of the traditional governmental role.

Traditional funding sources for natural resource protection and acquisition of open space include federal, state, and local funds. Government agencies have a variety of grant programs, for water quality enhancement, wildlife protection, habitat restoration and enhancement, groundwater recharge, stormwater pollution planning, fisheries restoration, and watershed protection. Funds may also be available from state, county, and local city voter-approved bonds, such as Proposition 12 (The Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act) and Proposition 13 (the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Bond Act) or assessment districts. The Los Angeles County Safe Neighborhood Parks Acts (Proposition A) of 1992 and 1996 have been responsible for most of the Los Angeles River greening and riverfront parks. These sources will likely be the primary source of funds for acquisition of lands and individual projects.

In addition to securing funds from traditional sources, the State Conservancies will work to identify and create funding opportunities from private trusts. Trusts acquire land for transfer to a third party, when financing is organized. Private foundations should be a source of additional funding.

Funding for planning, management, and maintenance of open space, including historic and cultural sites, must also be addressed. Wherever feasible, plans for acquisition of open space should include a plan for securing the necessary funds for long-term maintenance of those spaces. Many existing facilities have suffered from inadequate maintenance and require funding to restore those facilities to acceptable conditions. To help with on-going maintenance and public services, expanded funding opportunities should be created.

Existing funding sources will not be overlooked. Currently, federal, state, and local agencies, and individual cities expend considerable resources to maintain existing parks, open space, trails, bike paths, and flood protection facilities. For example, optimization of existing water resources through improved water conservation and increased groundwater

recharge could reduce the need for imported water and result in cost savings that could be used to meet other water resource needs.

Compliance with current legislative mandates, such as those related to stormwater runoff quality, will require counties, cities, local agencies, and private landowners to expend resources to develop, implement, maintain, and monitor Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plans. Additional resources will be needed to implement the recently adopted requirements to eliminate trash and other contaminants from the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers. Caltrans plans to expend considerable sums to mitigate stormwater pollution from State highways. The State Conservancies will encourage discussion of how best to optimize the expenditure of resources to mitigate non-point stormwater runoff pollution to accomplish multiple objectives where feasible.

Discussion

The following outline describes needs for Long-Term Funding and Potential Sources of Long-Term Funding.

Needs for Long-Term Funding

RMC Core Operations: Management, Board Support, and Planning

Annual Operating Budget for Office Operations

Staff: Personnel Positions for Acquisition Services (Legal), Grants Administration, Project Management, and Administrative Support

Consultant Services (and/or Additional Staffing) Associated with Land Acquisition, Planning, and Development.

Grants Programs: Grants to Cities, Other Local Agencies, and Organizations for both acquisition and development

Capital Programs: Acquisition and Development of Public Lands

Preacquisition Real Estate, Legal, Due Diligence and Planning

Acquisition of Fee Title and/or Easements

Interim Carrying Costs of Properties Prior to Completion of Development

Project Planning and Design, Public Involvement, and Coordination with Local Jurisdictions

Remediation for Site Contamination (portion not covered by seller, where applicable)

Property Development and Construction

Partnerships with Other Agencies

Matching Funds or Portion of Capital Costs

Operations and Maintenance

(The Working Group is pursuing a separate consideration of O & M policy. However RMC may elect to provide for operations and maintenance, whether by staff, contract or partnership with other agencies, or by various combinations, the costs will need to be addressed in any case.)

Maintenance, Interim and Ongoing.

Security and Fire Protection, Interim and Ongoing.

Visitor Services

Liability

Potential Sources of Long-Term Funding

Annual State Budget

Authorization for Personnel Positions

Annual Appropriations for Core Operations

Specific Appropriations for Grant Programs and Capital Programs via Member Requests and/or Legislation

State Bonds

Proposition 40: Joint Projects with Other Agencies; Competitive Grants

“Son” and “Grandson” of Proposition 40: Assuming Californians will continue to vote to invest in open space and environmental protection and enhancement, future state bond issues may well be larger than Propositions 12, 13, and 40. RMC could participate in generating and shaping the bond issue proposals to assure the region of an equitable share of the resources to be generated.

State Programs

Existing Grant Programs: State Parks, Wildlife Conservation Board, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Caltrans

Federal Programs

Existing Grant Programs: US Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Soil Conservation Service, Department of Transportation, Others.

Legislative Programs: Solis NPS Bill, Specific Corps Appropriation (See Caucus below)

Partnerships

Joint Capital Projects with Federal, State, Regional and Local Agencies

Cooperative Projects with Agencies to Leverage Their Investments to Achieve Regulatory Compliance (TMDL and SUSMP Compliance)

Nongovernmental Partners

Land Trusts

Foundations, National and Local

Corporate and Individual Gifts

Bequests

Project-Generated Revenues

Leases, Concessions, Easements

Sales of Portions of Acquired Properties

Local Voters

Regional and/or Local funds (possibly through bonds) for Acquisition and/or Maintenance of Public Open Space, Financed by Countywide Property Tax Assessment or Local Assessment District

Endowment or Nonprofit Support Group

While it may not be appropriate for a public agency to set up an endowment fund directly, such a fund could be a useful vehicle to assure future funding for operations and maintenance. RMC could consider facilitating a quasi-public endowment or a tightly structured nonprofit for this purpose. Examples of nonprofits that support public facilities include the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association and the Golden Gate National Park Association.

Caucus

Following the example set by the Lake Tahoe and Santa Ana regions, RMC could play a central role in facilitating a regional caucus, building a political consensus that involves all the relevant agencies. The influence such a caucus can have is indicated by the federal and State funding for Lake Tahoe and the large portion of Proposition 13 allocated to the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA). When the regional agencies and elected officials are able to speak with one voice, legislation and budget allocations at federal and State levels, will follow.

7. Habitat

Parkway and Open Space Working Group

June 7, 2002

Habitat Recommendations

Consideration of Habitat Issues and Creation of a Habitat and Science Advisory Panel

■ Requested Actions

1. That the RMC Board incorporate, as a matter of policy, habitat considerations into all RMC work.
2. That the RMC Board initiate a territory-wide RMC Habitat Plan.
3. That the RMC Board establish a Habitat and Science Advisory Panel.

■ Working Group Recommendation

The Working Group recommends that the RMC Board incorporate, as a matter of policy, habitat considerations into all aspects of RMC work, including: acquisition decisions, project plan development, project implementation, management of RMC projects, and monitoring and assessment of RMC projects. When considering habitat, the RMC should consider existing habitat, historical habitat, and potential habitat. The Working Group Recommends that the RMC:

- Take immediate steps towards the commencement of a territory-wide RMC Habitat Plan
- Consider habitat issues territory-wide and on a project-by-project basis prior to completion of an RMC Habitat Plan
- Utilize existing studies and plans relevant to habitat issues within RMC territory. Existing information should also be utilized after completion of an RMC Habitat Plan, but is especially critical to RMC work prior to the completion of this Plan.
- Consider the urgency of threats to existing habitat in preservation and restoration decisions

The Working Group also recommends that the RMC Board create a Habitat and Science Advisory Panel. This committee would become a permanent panel of scientists and experts assembled to function as an advisory committee to the Board. The Habitat and Science Advisory Panel should be devoted exclusively to issues pertaining to habitat, wildlife, and other natural processes and as such should consist solely of scientists or other persons possessing demonstrated expertise in issues relating to habitat, wildlife, or natural processes. The panel should represent a broad range of scientific expertise including:

- Scientists or other experts familiar with regional natural processes such as hydrology, fluvial geomorphology, sediment transport, and fire cycle
- Scientists or other experts familiar with the full range of issues pertaining to native vegetation such as native plant communities, species composition, exotic species management, and rare and endangered plant species and communities
- Scientists or other experts familiar with the full range of issues pertaining to native wildlife, such as: wildlife communities, species composition, rare and endangered wildlife species, exotic species management, and wildlife movement

The panel could appropriately be drawn from a range of sources, such as United States Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Forest Service, California, Department of Fish and Game, California Coastal Conservancy, Resources Agencies, University Faculty, Scientists and Other Practitioners. Although the panel is envisioned to be permanent, membership on the panel could change, as RMC's needs dictate. RMC Staff would generate a recommended list of Habitat and Science Advisory Panel Members, but power of Panel

appointment would remain with the RMC Board. Meetings of the Habitat Advisory Panel should be open to the public to ensure the integrity of the Panel. Public participation can be limited to an official comment period.

The overall mission of a Habitat and Science Advisory Panel would be the maximization of habitat, wildlife, and other natural resources within RMC territory. Although the Advisory Panel would greatly strengthen all future RMC work with regard to habitat, wildlife, and management of natural resources, the Panel is critical to RMC work in advance of an RMC Habitat Plan. The Working Group recommends that the RMC Habitat and Science Advisory Panel

- Participate in all RMC planning work, including territory-wide planning such as the RMC Habitat Plan, and planning for specific RMC parcels and projects
- Assist the RMC Board and Staff in all relevant aspects of their work including the application of a detailed Habitat Plan, once completed; other RMC planning work; acquisition choices; project planning; project development; project implementation; project management; and monitoring and assessment activities
- Evaluate and compare potential RMC projects to assist the RMC board in making acquisition choices that maximize habitat, wildlife, and natural processes both within the confines of project boundaries, and across RMC territory
- Develop strategies for preservation, restoration, and creation of habitat in a variety of settings, including: mountains, hills, and foothills, riparian corridors along the rivers and tributaries, as well as the more urbanized areas within RMC territory
- Develop a Strategic Habitat Priorities Map based upon existing information to guide future RMC planning efforts and assist RMC activities in advance of the RMC Habitat Plan
- Review other habitat plans and studies relevant to RMC territory to identify information gaps, and propose future research and planning

■ Background

The Working Group believes that the requested actions are necessary and appropriate because

- Regionally native habitat is one of the scarcest resources within RMC territory
- Both the quantity and quality of habitat within RMC territory are presently experiencing steep decline
- The declining quantity and quality of habitat within RMC territory is causing numerous, significant negative impacts on the region's wildlife populations
- Large-scale habitat conservation and restoration efforts are required to sustain many of the region's plant and animal species and communities presently threatened with further decline, local extirpation, or extinction
- The RMC's legislative charge and vast territory uniquely position it to execute large-scale habitat conservation and restoration beyond the scope of the more numerous, but more localized conservation and restoration efforts. Few entities are involved with large-scale habitat conservation, restoration, and reconnection within RMC territory.
- Without careful consideration of habitat and wildlife issues, RMC activities could result in harm to existing or potential habitat areas, further imperiling plant communities and wildlife populations
- Proper consideration of the complex issues pertaining to habitat, wildlife, and natural processes requires a broad range of scientific expertise
- Many valuable educational and recreational opportunities in RMC territory cannot be realized unless habitat is preserved, restored, and created

7. SCOPE OF SUBSEQUENT PLANS

Common Ground suggested that to fully develop some of the concepts described in the plan, the RMC would need to undertake a second phase of this open space plan process, and to develop, within three years of the adoption of this plan, several subsequent plans, which are discussed in more detail below.

A. RIVER PARKWAYS AND TRIBUTARIES

Common Ground provided the following direction:

Rivers Parkway Plan: To create a continuous ribbon of open space along the San Gabriel River, the lower Los Angeles River and the Rio Hondo, a Rivers Parkway Plan should be developed. A proposed study by the National Park Service to create a National Recreation Area along the rivers could inform this process. Partners in the development of the Rivers Parkway Plan may include the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the California State Parks and Recreation Department, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, and each riverfront city. The Rivers Parkway Plan shall outline a prioritized list of projects, identify potential funding, and include a work program to accomplish the acquisition and development of each project. This will include projects designated in the Los Angeles River Master Plan and the in-progress San Gabriel River Master Plan.

Tributary Plans: To extend the network of open space, trails and bike paths along tributaries, the RMC will encourage the relevant agencies engaged in subwatershed plans to address open space, habitat and passive recreation along the major tributaries of the rivers, including the Compton Creek, Coyote Creek, Rio Hondo, and the Upper San Gabriel River (including Walnut and San Jose Creeks). Potential partners in this process include the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, Orange County Watershed and Environmental Programs, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the San Gabriel Regional Mountains Conservancy the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, the tributary-fronting cities and stakeholders involved in subwatershed plans.

To assist the Working Group in their consideration of this topic, the consultant team developed the following matrix, which was provided to the Working Group at their first meeting (on January 30, 2001).

River Parkways

Agencies: U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, State Parks, L.A. County Public Works, L.A. County Parks

Potential Resource Partners: TBD

Stakeholders: Each riverfront city

Conceptual Scope: Outline a prioritized list of projects, identify potential funding, and include a work program to accomplish the acquisition and development of each project. This will include projects designated in the Los Angeles River Master Plan and the in-progress San Gabriel River Master Plan.

Issues: How to anticipate and complement the proposed study of a National Recreation Area along the San Gabriel and lower Los Angeles Rivers (as proposed in pending federal legislation)?

Can the RMC prepare a plan for a Rivers Parkway in advance of the completion of the San Gabriel River Master Plan (currently scheduled for 12/03)?

Tributaries

Agencies: LA Regional Water Quality Control Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, LA County Public Works, LA County Parks & Recreation, OC Watershed and Environmental Programs, S.G. Regional Mountains Conservancy, LA and SG Rivers Watershed Council, San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments

Potential Resource Partners: TBD

Stakeholders: Tributary-fronting cities and stakeholders involved in subwatershed plans

Conceptual Scope: To extend the network of open space, trails and bike paths along tributaries, the RMC will encourage the relevant agencies engaged in preparing subwatershed plans to address open space, habitat and passive recreation along the major tributaries of the rivers, including the Compton Creek, Coyote Creek, Rio Hondo, and the Upper San Gabriel River (including Walnut and San Jose Creeks). (Also Arroyo Seco and Sun Valley watersheds.)

Issues: Since the scope of work for subwatershed plans is already established, what substantive activities are needed or appropriate?

What can/should be done for tributaries where there is no sub-watershed plan?

- Los Cerritos Channel
- Verdugo Wash
- Burbank West
- Tujunga Wash
- Upper L.A. River

■ River Parkway Plan Outline and Next Steps

Based upon discussions with the Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways and Corridors Subcommittee, the consultant team developed the following description and outline for a River Parkways Plan.

■ A Vision for River Parkways

River parkways provide a potential to establish a clear identity for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and serve as a tangible linkage between many of the RMC's programs and initiatives. Greenbelts along the rivers and major tributaries will create ribbons of open space from the mountains to the sea, provide pocket parks and passive recreation, and expand access to open space across the urbanized portions of the territory. These landscaped spaces will provide natural areas for wildlife habitat, cleanse stormwater runoff, promote groundwater infiltration, and enhance flood protection by serving as buffers between the rivers and adjacent land uses. Wetlands adjacent to the rivers and tributaries, and estuaries at the mouths of the rivers will provide vital habitat for native plants, animals and migratory birds. Greenbelts through the heart of the

watershed will become valued aesthetic amenities that link neighborhoods, create a sense of community, increase property values and encourage economic development in adjacent neighborhoods. Bike paths and trails will connect community parks and other regional open space resources and create viable routes for bicycle commuters. Interpretive signage and exhibits will provide information about the plant and animal species that occur in the vicinity, the natural and cultural history of the area, and the context of the site within the larger watershed.

Thus, river parkways not only have the potential to create valued open space amenities, they also could provide linear habitat corridors, create links between urban areas and the mountains, hills and foothills, serve as the backbone of a regional system of bike paths and trails, and provide interpretive opportunities for cultural and historic sites. These parkways could serve as an outdoor classroom for nearby schools and a research laboratory for local colleges and universities to monitor water quality, habitat diversity and progress towards restoration of a balance between human and natural systems in the watersheds. The River Parkway plan also provides an opportunity to put into practice many of the Guiding Principles established in *Common Ground*.

■ Purpose

The proposed River Parkway Plan will provide a framework for open space planning along the rivers and tributaries and create linkages between the other subsequent plans proposed in *Common Ground*, including habitat, mountains, hills, and foothills, trails and bike paths, and cultural landscapes. The Plan will also serve as the backbone and provide a common unifying theme for current and future planning efforts such as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works San Gabriel River Master Plan, the subwatershed plans funded by the State Water Resources Control Board, and the proposed study to include the rivers, major tributaries and the San Gabriel Mountains as a collective unit of the National Park Service. Plan development must acknowledge that these parallel planning efforts will proceed according to their own schedules, but will benefit from input from, and the regional focus of, a River Parkway Plan.

■ Importance

Public Resources Code Section 32604 directed the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy shall do the following:

- (a) Establish policies and priorities for the conservancy regarding the San Gabriel River and the Lower Los Angeles River, and their watersheds, and conduct any necessary planning activities, in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 32602.
- (b) Give priority to river related projects that create expanded opportunities for recreation, greening, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat along the corridor of the river, and in parts of the river channel that can be improved for the above purposes without infringing on water quality, water supply, and necessary flood control;

To meet this mandate, the River Parkway plan must address the provision of open space along the rivers, which must recognize the existing urbanized character of the lands adjacent to the rivers, particularly along the lower Los Angeles River. Unlike the Los Angeles River, much of the San Gabriel River is still lined with open space. Although significant constraints exist with much of this land use (such as power line easements), many of the opportunities described above may be realized along the San Gabriel River within a time frame much shorter than other parts of the region. It is therefore important that actions be defined now to take advantage of current opportunities before they are lost.

Recognizing that a number of planning efforts are underway at various scales within the territory, the RMC's River Parkway Plan can provide an important unifying theme to assure each of these plans are consistent with the Guiding Principles established in *Common Ground*. The rivers and major tributaries are the links between each of the subwatersheds and the River Parkway Plan can serve as the link between each of the subwatershed planning efforts.

Within the RMC's planning goals outlined in Common Ground there is a recognition of the need for developing plans for other specific objectives such as natural habitat protection and restoration, and the preservation and enhancement of open space in the mountains, hills, and foothills. The River Parkway Plan must incorporate and complement the goals and objectives described in these parallel planning efforts to assure the most efficient progress towards the RMC's overall mission. The proposed outline below for the scope of the Plan therefore acknowledges that portions of the work for these other planning efforts should be developed concurrently.

■ River Parkway Plan Outline

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Background/Overview
- B. Regulatory Framework
- C. Plan Purpose
- D. Vision
- E. Goals/Objectives
- F. Plan Area

III. CURRENT/PRIOR PLANS

- A. RMC Plans
 - 1. Habitat
 - 2. Mountains, Hills and Foothills
 - 3. Trails and Bike Paths
 - 4. Cultural Landscapes
 - 5. Monitoring and Assessment
- B. Other Agency Plans

IV. STAKEHOLDERS/COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- A. Community Outreach Efforts
- B. Stakeholders
- C. Potential Funding Partners
- D. Community Participation/Results

V. POLICIES AND PRIORITIES

- A. Definitions
- B. Project Evaluation Criteria
- C. Funding Priorities

VI. INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS/ANALYSIS

- A. Natural Resources & Processes Inventory & Analysis
 - 1. Hydrology/Fluvial Geomorphology
 - 2. Vegetation
 - 3. Wildlife
- B. Human Dimensions
 - 1. Land use
 - 2. Access
 - 3. Trails
- C. Existing Projects Inventory
 - 1. Flood Management Facilities
 - 2. Spreading Grounds
 - 3. Parks
 - 4. Habitat

- 5. Wetlands
- 6. Trails
- D. Opportunities and Constraints Analysis
 - 1. Mountains/Foothills
 - 2. Valley Floor
 - 3. Coastal Plain

VII. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- A. Define Potential Projects
 - 1. Mountains/Foothills
 - 2. Valley Floor
 - 3. Coastal Plain
- B. Prepare Alternatives Analysis
 - 1. Regional
 - 2. Local
 - 3. Site Specific
- C. Prioritize Alternatives
- D. Develop Implementation Plan
 - 1. Strategies
 - 2. Schedule
 - 3. Costs
 - 4. Benefits

VIII. IMPACTS/CEQA/EIR

- A. Affected Environments and Impacts
- B. Compliance
- C. Changed Circumstances
- D. Clarifications

IX. MANAGEMENT/MONITORING/RESEARCH

- A. Management Plan
- B. Monitoring Plan
- C. Data Gap Identification and Future Research Needs Plan

X. FUNDING STRATEGY/SOURCES

- A. Financial Assurance
- B. Financing Strategy
- C. Funding Sources

XI. GLOSSARY

■ Explanation of Plan Scope

Introduction/Background/Purpose

This section should describe the purpose of the Plan, the guiding legislation, its history and intent. This section should also introduce the reader to the following topics: the geography, topography, prehistory, and history of the region, specifically as it relates to the proposed River Parkway; the significance of the region's resources--natural, cultural, and social; existing conditions; current issues; and efforts to improve the river corridor. It should also prepare the reader for the recommended future actions.

Vision/Goals and Objectives

A clear vision for the River Parkway should be defined to assure consensus among stakeholders and to provide guidance to proposed projects. A clear vision helps stakeholders understand, relate to, and support protection and restoration efforts. A vision can rally individuals to take action and to focus their efforts on specific goals. In addition to a vision, groups usually develop goals, objectives and action items. Each of these are defined below:

Vision: Descriptive statement of what the watershed will look like after a given time span (usually 5 to 10+ years). A vision should be comprehensive enough to capture the thrust of the efforts of the overall mission.

Mission statement: General statement about what and how the vision is going to be accomplished.

Goals: More specific than the mission statement, describe what is needed to accomplish the mission and obtain the vision, refer to components of overall effort, sometimes quantifiable.

Objectives: Elaboration of goals, describe types of management or activities and are mostly quantifiable.

Action Items: Explain who is going to do what, where, and when; they generally articulate how to implement the objectives and should be quantified; benchmarks of existing conditions and/or measurable indicators should be developed for action items.

The acronym “SMART” has been developed to assist with development of goals. This acronym reminds those setting the goal that each goal should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant to the mission, and **T**ime-bound.

Goals and objectives should be defined temporally recognizing that development of a River Parkway may take decades to accomplish and that phases will be required.

Goals and objectives should also be defined spatially recognizing that the rivers include specific reaches and each reach may require a specific set of goals. For example the goal for River Parkways identified in *Common Ground*: a continuous ribbon of trails, open space, active and passive recreation areas, and wildlife habitat along the San Gabriel, Los Angeles, and Rio Hondo Rivers. The specific treatment of each segment of the Parkway should be determined by the existing conditions of the parcel, the needs and desires of the local community and the opportunities for connection and linkages presented at that location.

■ CURRENT/PRIOR PLANS

The River Parkway plan should also be consistent with other planning goals such as the Los Angeles River Master Plan and any relevant Orange County planning efforts. This section should provide a summary discussion of each of those plans, and their relevance. Recommendations for interface with other relevant plans should be included to assure synergy, consensus building, and leveraging of fiscal resources. At a minimum the Plan should coordinate with the San Gabriel River Master Plan currently underway by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works which has identified the following goals:

- Preserve & enhance habitat systems through public education, connectivity, and balance with other uses;
- Encourage & enhance safe and diverse recreation systems, while providing for expansion, equitable and sufficient access, balance, and multi-purpose uses;
- Enhance & protect open space systems through conservation, aesthetics, connectivity, stewardship, and multi-purpose uses;
- Maintain flood protection and existing water and other rights while enhancing flood management activities through the integration with recreation, open space, and habitat systems;

- Maintain existing water and other rights while enhancing water quality, water supply, groundwater recharge, and water conservation through the integration with recreation, open space, and habitat systems.
- The River Parkway Plan should include a detailed background discussion of existing plans that are relevant to its mission. Following is an example of the type of discussion that should be included for these plans:

Prior Plans (adapted from Common Ground)

1930: The Olmsted-Bartholomew plan, entitled *Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region*, recommended a network of parkways to connect the mountains, rivers, parks, and beaches. Parkway along the river were intended to reduce the need for structural flood protection features. The centerpiece of that plan, a network of open spaces connected by parkways, remains the path not taken.

1996: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works prepared a Master Plan for the Los Angeles River, which recommended environmental restoration, new trails and connections to existing trails, tree plantings, signage, murals, and economic development opportunities. A follow-on project, the development of landscape standards and guidelines, is currently underway.

1997: Cal Poly Pomona 606 Design Studio completed a plan titled: *Puente Hills Corridor: Greenspace Connectivity for Wildlife and People*. This report explored the recreational and habitat preservation planning issues for the Puente Hills from Whittier Narrows to the Cleveland National Forest.

2000: Cal Poly Pomona graduate students developed the plan entitled *Reconnecting the San Gabriel Valley: A Planning Approach for the Creation of Interconnected Urban Wildlife Corridor Networks*, which delineated a planning process to connect wildlife habitats and identified specific opportunities for improvements along the edges of the San Gabriel River.

Current Plans (adapted from Common Ground)

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works is currently developing a *San Gabriel River Master Plan*, a consensus-driven process to identify project opportunities for recreation, open space, and habitat enhancements, maintenance of flood protection, preservation of natural resources, and maintenance of existing water rights. Completion of the plan is scheduled for 2003.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works is working with the City of Pico Rivera on a plan for *San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds Enhancements*, to provide public access, create recreation opportunities, and improve the appearance of the existing spreading grounds (used to recharge groundwater) along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers. This plan is intended as a prototype for multi-objective projects in the region.

The State Water Resources Control Board has funded subwatershed plans for Compton Creek, Coyote Creek, Rio Hondo, and the Upper San Gabriel River (including Walnut and San Jose Creeks), which are anticipated to begin in late 2001.

■ STAKEHOLDERS/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This section should describe the community outreach effort undertaken to develop the vision for and content of the Plan. The process of creating the Plan is probably more valuable than the actual final document because it is the process that creates trust, momentum, drive, enthusiasm, and the relationships necessary to implement recommended actions.

This section should also identify the stakeholders who participated in the development of the Plan including:

- **Each Riverfront City:** Include a list of riverfront cities along the San Gabriel River, the Lower Los Angeles River, the Rio Hondo, and their tributaries.
- **Non-Profit Groups and Community-Based Organizations:** Identify other stakeholders who may benefit from the objectives of the Plan or who may be impacted by the Plan.
- **Partners:** Identify partners who can offer assistance in accomplishing the mission. Potential partners already identified include: U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, California State Parks, Los Angeles County Public Works, Los Angeles County Parks, Orange County agencies.

■ POLICIES AND PRIORITIES

The River Parkway Plan should include a set of policies and priorities to guide actions towards its mission. The RMC Board established at their meeting on January 11, 2002 a Working Group to make recommendations to the Board on how to implement the strategies and subsequent plans such as this River Parkway Plan. The Working Group subsequently established at their meeting on January 30, 2002 a Rivers, Tributaries, Parkways and Corridors Subcommittee (RTPC Subcommittee): to identify opportunities for acquisition or projects along the rivers and tributaries which are not currently planned.

Because of the size and complexity of the RMC territory and the magnitude of open space, habitat and watershed restoration needs, the Working Group recommended that the RMC Board consider initially focusing the Conservancy's discretionary capital funds in a manner that establishes a clear identity for the RMC. As the enabling legislation [PRC Code Section 32605(b)] requires that the RMC "[g]ive priority to river related projects that create expanded opportunities for recreation, greening, aesthetic improvement, and wildlife habitat along the corridor of the river..." the Working Group recommended to the RMC Board the following:

1. For the next three years, the RMC Board reserve a majority of discretionary capital funds for river-related projects as the most effective manner of focusing project development in a manner that will create a clear identity for the Conservancy, develop a unified work plan, create a visible and accessible parkway, initiate a series of demonstration projects, and meet the intent of the enabling legislation.
2. For the next three years, the RMC Board strive to allocate at least 60 percent of its available discretionary funds to river related projects, recognizing that other key opportunities may take precedence in any given year.
3. RMC Board direct staff to develop guidelines that recognize the importance of the following types of river-related projects: Strategic River Parkway Projects, Geographically Distributed River Parkway Projects, and Opportunity Projects.
4. RMC Board direct staff to recommend modification of existing RMC project evaluation criteria to give additional priority to river related projects.

In addition the Working Group developed draft evaluation criteria which give greater priority to river related projects, and proposed definitions for specific terms such as "river related projects" in support of the recommendations outlined above.

■ INVENTORY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS/ANALYSIS

This section should describe the significance of the area's resources--natural, cultural, and social; existing conditions; current issues; and efforts to date to improve the river parkway corridor.

The Working Group has recommended that the River Parkway be defined as ¼ mile on either side of the existing river channel. An inventory of existing land use, property owners, property boundaries and opportunities and constraints is essential to develop a foundation on which to move forward. The RMC staff have made initial progress on this task through the solicitation of information on existing and proposed

projects along the river (see attached list of projects and project map). Additionally, the staff has created a project tracking and evaluation software for maintaining, updating and prioritizing projects as they are defined.

This section should also include an inventory of project opportunities and constraints throughout the river corridor by reach: mountains/hills region, valley floor, and coastal plain.

■ IMPLEMENTATION PLAN/RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The purpose of any plan is to organize and create action. The purpose of the River Parkway Plan is to organize and create action which will result in a River Parkway. Alternatives and potential projects should be defined in this section based on the project evaluation criteria and other policies and priorities established by the RMC. Alternatives should be evaluated against objectives of other plans by the RMC (particularly the Habitat Plan) and other agencies. Tools such as stakeholder input, hydrologic models, cost benefit analysis, GIS and other analytical methods should be employed to provide useful information to assist decision makers. Alternatives should then be prioritized and a plan for implementation developed. The implementation plan should include a recommended alternative or strategy for achieving the goals and objectives of the River Parkway Plan, costs as well as benefits, and an implementation time schedule.

■ IMPACTS/CEQA/EIR

The River Parkway Plan may or may not require a CEQA process depending on the contents of the final plan scope. As the RMC staff prepares a Request for Proposal for the RMC Habitat Plan, legal counsel will need to advise on the necessity of CEQA based upon the final plan scope.

■ MANAGEMENT/MONITORING/RESEARCH

Any plan for action must include a monitoring component to assess progress towards its goals. RMC projects should undergo both implementation monitoring and effectiveness monitoring. Implementation monitoring will examine projects to insure that they were developed according to the Habitat Plan and the site-scale plan developed for the specific project under review. Effectiveness monitoring will be ongoing and will attempt to determine if the project is helping to achieve RMC goals for habitat or whether it is having any negative impacts. Develop a monitoring plan based on measurable goals established for the River Parkway. Monitor and report progress towards the goals in an annual report.

■ FUNDING STRATEGY/SOURCES

The River Parkway Plan should include potential funding sources and partners to assist with implementation as well as long term maintenance of projects. The Working Group has developed a recommendation for a Long Term Funding Strategy which will be considered by the RMC Board at their July 2002 meeting. This strategy should be considered as the basis for developing funding for River Parkway Projects.

Some existing funding sources have already been identified and include the following:

- Proposition 12 and 13
- Proposition 40
- Caltrans: Environmental Enhancement & Mitigation program
- California Department of Water Resources: Urban Streams Restoration Program
- Los Angeles County: Excess Proposition A funds
- State Parks: Habitat Conservation funds
- Wildlife Conservation Board: California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program, Habitat Conservation Fund; Wildlife Restoration Fund and Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund
- National Park Service: Rivers & Trails Program; Land & Water Conservation Fund; National Trails Program, Urban Park & Recreation Recovery

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Section 1135 Habitat Restoration program
- Existing property assessments or utility fees

■ IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS:

- Recognizing the importance of large landowners (such as the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Southern California Edison and Orange County Public Facility and Resource Department), begin developing agreements with these agencies to secure the use of their land in a manner consistent with their goals and the goals of the River Parkway Plan.
- Recognizing the importance of close coordination with the Los Angeles County San Gabriel River Master Plan, the RMC should request a role on the multi-agency Executive Committee established to guide that planning process.
- The RMC should seek to be appointed to any other Executive Committee which may be responsible for future regional planning in the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles River watershed such as the National Park Service's proposed feasibility study planning effort.
- The RMC should also be actively involved in any future sub-regional planning in the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles River (such as the subwatershed plans funded by the State Water Resources Control Board from Coyote Creek in the south to the Upper San Gabriel River in the north).
- The RMC should also participate in other relevant planning efforts throughout their territory such as bike and trail planning, landscape design standards, and/or wetlands conservation and enhancement.

■ ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS:

- Convene a series of workshops of the RMC Board for the purpose of defining and then formally adopting goals and objectives for the River Parkway Plan consistent with the RMC's mission and the existing goals and objectives established in related plans.
- Describe long term planning efforts (10 to 50 year time frames) developed by agencies such as the U. S. Forest Service and National Park Service to help provide guidance to this long-term plan.
- Develop and maintain an electronic database of stakeholders
- Maintain communication with stakeholder community through distribution of meeting minutes, agendas, notices of upcoming action items
- Engage stakeholder community in decision-making regarding potential projects, funding opportunities, partnership opportunities, and grant competition
- Begin to implement projects consistent with the policies and priorities adopted above.
- Review policies and priorities of other conservancies to take advantage of their operating experience.
- Regularly review policies and priorities to reflect current Board sentiment.
- The River Parkway Plan should include a strategy for developing specific partnerships with relevant agencies (e.g. Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Southern California Edison and Orange County Public Facility and Resource Department) to assist with accomplishment of the mission.
- Develop a complete inventory of existing land use, property ownership, and property boundaries within the defined boundary of the River Parkway.
- Develop a prioritized list of projects consistent with local land use planning, local general plan guidance, and selection criteria developed by the RMC.
- Regularly update project list as projects are implemented, additional projects are proposed, and additional funding becomes available.
- Develop relationships with local agencies for specific grant programs:
- Explore developing a program with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and Orange County Public Facility and Resource Department for a channel beautification program (e.g. Consider

a program where the County would provide 50% of the funds for construction, and 50% for ongoing maintenance; Non profit organization, foundation, donation or city would provide the other 50%.

- Explore a grant program with various watershed organizations such as the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Watershed Management Division, and Orange County Public Facility and Resource Department for restoration projects in the public right of way and/or information about other designs for private property owners.
- Coordinate with State Resources Agency in managing funds earmarked for Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA) projects and any future San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles River watershed programs administered by the Resources Agency
- Target mitigation funding for watershed restoration, and river related projects.

B. HABITAT

Common Ground provided the following direction:

Habitat Conservation Plan: To preserve critical habitat, preserve, and establish habitat linkages and/or corridors, and to preserve, restore, and create wetlands, a comprehensive habitat plan for the watersheds is needed. This would include (1) detailed study and monitoring of potential habitat linkages in the watersheds; (2) comprehensive mapping of potential conservation sites; (3) ranking of potential sites according to their conservation value and vulnerability; and (4) analyses of aquatic and wetland habitats and species, which have generally received less study than terrestrial habitats and species. Potential partners in these efforts include the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the California Coastal Conservancy, the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, the Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority, counties, cities, and habitat and resource conservation organizations.

The RMC will also retain a conservation resource biologist to conduct a second phase of analysis and research of habitat linkages and corridors in the watersheds, to identify problems and opportunities related to species conservation in urban settings and provide for input from local experts.

The RMC will also look for partners to fund vegetation mapping for the watersheds. Vegetation mapping would improve understanding existing habitats and the extent of fragmentation, inform planning, and development of strategies for protection of habitats and the establishment and preservation of habitat linkages and corridors.

To assist the Working Group in their consideration of this topic, the consultant team developed the following matrix, which was provided to the Working Group at their first meeting (on January 30, 2001).

Habitat

Agencies: U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Fish and Game, Wildlife Conservation Board, California Coastal Conservancy, Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, Wildlife Corridor Conservation Authority, Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Potential Resource Partners: TBD

Stakeholders: Cities and habitat and resource conservation organizations

Conceptual Scope: To preserve critical habitat, preserve, and establish habitat linkages and/or corridors, and to preserve, restore, and create wetlands, a comprehensive habitat plan for the watersheds is needed. This would include (1) detailed study and monitoring of potential habitat linkages in the

watersheds; (2) comprehensive mapping of potential conservation sites; (3) ranking of potential sites according to their conservation value and vulnerability; and (4) analyses of aquatic and wetland habitats and species, which have generally received less study than terrestrial habitats and species.

Issues: What studies or information are needed to permit development of a comprehensive habitat plan (e.g., vegetative mapping)?
Who should lead habitat planning?
What is the priority of this plan, relative to the other subsequent plans?

(The following report from the Habitat Subcommittee was provided by Calvin R. Abe Associates.)

■ Habitat Subcommittee's Vision for RMC Habitat

The Habitat Subcommittee envisions large, diverse, well-connected habitat areas. These habitats will contain the full spectrum of native vegetation types, plant species, wildlife communities and wildlife species in a self-sustaining balance. RMC habitat will contain the highest degree of natural function possible requiring minimal maintenance. Habitat, containing rich and diverse wildlife, will become the crown jewel in RMC territory. Unique educational and recreational amenities for the public and additional features designed to enhance regional water quality, and conservation and flood management will be sensitively incorporated into the RMC habitat network, to prevent compromising the integrity of RMC habitat and the abundant and diverse wildlife that prospers there.

■ Purpose

The purpose of an RMC Habitat Plan is to create a blueprint for the development of the territory-wide network of functioning habitats described in the vision above. It is critical that RMC activities incorporate habitat objectives into all projects. A well crafted Habitat Plan can guide not only the large scale creation of the habitat network that is envisioned, but can also provide a project scale process for maximization of habitat components of each RMC project. An objective, scientifically credible plan can also provide leadership to the myriad other entities involved with habitat conservation and restoration throughout the region.

■ Importance

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Act directs the Conservancy (RMC) to "...acquire and manage public lands...to provide open-space, low-impact recreational and educational uses, water conservation, watershed improvement, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection..." Of all the tasks assigned to the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) the most unique potential contribution by the RMC would be regional preservation, restoration and reconnection of the region's abundant, but fragile and imperiled natural resources. It is also by far the most difficult of all of the RMC's aspirations for the lands within its territory.

The Habitat Subcommittee urges the RMC to consider habitat issues first, in all its work, and strive to constantly embrace a territory-wide perspective with regard to habitat issues, since survival of so many animal species depends on this sort of regional approach. The RMC must strive to embrace a territory-wide perspective with regard to habitat issues, which must be carefully considered in all RMC work. Preservation and restoration of the region's biodiversity and survival of many plant and animal species depends on this sort of regional approach. In most cases, RMC projects will have many opportunities to plan for and sensitively incorporate recreational and educational amenities. If habitat issues are not addressed first,

however, many opportunities for habitat and wildlife will be lost, and RMC projects will be little more than city parks with recreation opportunities indistinguishable from other city parks, and with minimal educational value. If habitat is effectively preserved, educational and interpretive materials about RMC open space can tout RMC success stories about RMC habitat and wildlife preservation, restoration and recovery. Inadequately addressed, RMC activities might introduce recreational features that increase human impacts on habitat areas, further damaging RMC habitat and hastening the demise of fragile species struggling for survival.

Many governmental entities work full time on water related issues such as water conservation, flood management and water quality. The County and every city within RMC territory engages in recreational and education programs. Numerous organizations and conservancies, as well as county and city governments actively work to preserve and restore natural resources, but the RMC is uniquely qualified to embark upon the ambitious task of *regional* preservation and restoration of natural resources so vital to the survival of many plant and animal species and communities. A territory-wide network of functioning habitats should be RMC's first and highest priority. Properly planned and implemented, preservation and restoration of habitat and wildlife populations can enhance each of the RMC's other goals: public open space, low-impact recreation and education, water conservation and watershed improvement.

Unfortunately, habitat conservation and restoration are complicated endeavors. Nature is a web of interconnected systems and processes. It simply is not enough to randomly purchase and preserve lands as they surface for sale in the real estate market. Current research indicates that human development in and around natural areas has altered habitats in ways that systematically favor some species at the expense of others. Saving imperiled species will involve restoring balance in the populations of many other species as well. Some of the species whose populations must be increased require large, well-connected habitats that can only be preserved or restored through careful, scientifically informed, regional planning. The territory-wide network of connected, functioning habitats envisioned for the RMC may be the only way to secure survival for region's rich natural resources and biodiversity. Many entities are actively pursuing preservation and restoration activities, but no entity has embarked upon this ambitious, yet urgently needed science-based, regional planning effort. This can be the legacy of the RMC.

■ Urgency

The stakes are very high in RMC decisions with regard to habitat. Careful consideration of habitat issues is urgently needed in RMC work for two reasons. First, RMC has started doing actual on-the-ground projects, which must address habitat issues. Second, several plant communities and plant and animal species that currently exist within RMC territory are teetering on the brink of extinction, and many additional communities and species are suffering dramatic decline as human development continues to devour the unprotected natural habitats that remain. Although U.S. Fish and Wildlife is chiefly responsible for species recovery, the RMC has many opportunities to assist in this critical effort. All RMC goals are aimed at urgent needs, such as education and recreation, but no goal is more urgent than the conservation and preservation of habitats needed by imperiled species. A recreational facility can potentially wait five years to be built, but in five years time an endangered species can easily slide into extinction.

Once a species becomes extinct, it is gone forever.

■ Habitat Subcommittee Report

In the remaining sections of this report, the Habitat Subcommittee offers the RMC a Plan Scope for a future RMC Habitat Plan. In the section that follows, scope items are described. Although the purpose of many scope items will be obvious, the purpose of other items may not be as clear. The Habitat Subcommittee debated several of these topics extensively, and the substance of these discussions will greatly enhance the reader's understanding and appreciation of the Habitat Plan Scope.

The appendices contain the final Habitat Recommendations as approved by the Working Group, a description of the information database effort initiated jointly by the Habitat and Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittees, and two inventories developed as informational tools designed to assist the RMC planning efforts, as well as other RMC activities—especially prior to completion of the planning work. The first of these two inventories presents plans and studies relevant to habitat and mountains, hills and foothills issues. The subsequent section presents an inventory of potential resource partners, which are entities that might potentially contribute funding, expertise or other assistance to RMC activities, especially commencement of the Habitat and Mountains, Hills and Foothills planning efforts. Although these inventories were developed jointly with the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee, they are presented only once, in the appendices to this report, in order to avoid duplication.

■ Recommended RMC Habitat Plan Scope

Plan Outline

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Background/Overview
- B. Regulatory Framework
- C. Plan Purpose
- D. Community Participation
- E. Vision
- F. Goals/Objectives
- G. Plan Area

III. INVENTORY/ANALYSIS

- A. Natural Resources & Processes Inventory & Analysis
 - 1. Hydrology/Fluvial Geomorphology
 - a. water supply/conservation
 - b. flood management
 - c. water quality
 - d. sediment transport
 - 2. Vegetation
 - a. historic vegetation—species and plant communities, species composition/biodiversity
 - b. existing vegetation— species and plant communities, species composition/biodiversity
 - c. potential vegetation— species and plant communities, species composition/biodiversity
 - d. plan plant species and communities
 - f. critical existing and potential habitat areas
 - 3. Wildlife
 - a. historic species and species composition
 - b. existing species and species composition
 - c. protected species
 - d. exotic species
 - e. plan wildlife species
 - f. critical existing and potential wildlife patches
 - g. habitat fragmentation
 - h. critical wildlife movement corridors
 - 4. Natural Processes and their Impacts on Habitat and Wildlife

- a. climate
 - b. erosion and sediment transport
 - c. fire cycle
 - d. flood cycle
 - e. seismic activity
 - 5. Interface and Human Impacts Analysis
 - a. human-wildlife interface
 - b. hydrologic modifications
 - c. sediment management practices
 - d. fire suppression
 - e. adjacent landscaping
 - f. adjacent land uses
 - B. Human Dimensions
 - 1. Political Jurisdictions
 - 2. Analysis of Existing Land Use
 - a. residential
 - b. recreation
 - c. commercial/industrial
 - d. infrastructure
- IV. Plan**
- A. Plan Scales
 - 1. Territory-Wide
 - 2. Patch-Corridor Network
 - 3. Site-scale
 - B. Natural Processes, Habitat and Wildlife
 - 1. Hydrology, Fluvial Geomorphology and Natural Processes
 - a. water supply/conservation
 - b. flood management
 - c. water quality
 - d. sediment transport
 - 2. Vegetation
 - a. vegetation plan—species and plant communities
 - b. protected species and plant communities strategies
 - c. vegetation patches and linkages
 - d. exotic species management
 - f. project-scale vegetation planning process
 - 3. Wildlife
 - a. wildlife plan—species and species composition
 - b. protected species strategies
 - c. wildlife patches and linkages
 - d. mortality sink analysis
 - d. exotic species management
 - f. project-scale wildlife planning process
 - 4. Interface and Human Impacts Management
 - a. human-wildlife interface
 - b. hydrologic modifications plan
 - c. sediment management practices
 - d. fire suppression policy
 - C. Adaptive Management and Habitat Plan Update and Modification Process
 - 1. Monitoring and Assessment Program

2. Plan Evaluation Process
3. Plan Update and Modification Process

V. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- A. Implementation Scales
 1. Territory-Wide
 2. Patch-Corridor Network
 3. Site-scale
- B. Implementation Strategies
- C. Implementation Cost
- D. Phasing Options
 1. Inventory and Analysis
 2. Plan
 3. Plan Implementation

VI. IMPACTS/CEQA/EIR

- A. Affected Environments and Impacts
- B. Compliance
- C. Changed Circumstances
- D. Clarifications

VII. MANAGEMENT/MONITORING/RESEARCH

- A. Adaptive Management Plan
 1. Territory-Wide
 2. Project-Scale
- B. Monitoring Plan
 1. Scales
 - a. territory-wide
 - b. project-scale
 2. Implementation Monitoring Plan
 3. Effectiveness Monitoring Plan
- C. Evaluation Parameters
 1. Vegetation
 - a. evaluation of changes in vegetation—plant species and plant communities abundance and composition
 - b. evaluation of changes in plan plant species and communities abundance and composition
 - c. evaluation of changes in exotic plant species diversity and abundance
 - d. evaluation of changes in critical existing and potential habitat areas
 - e. evaluation of changes in habitat patch number, size, configuration, distribution and connectivity
 2. Wildlife
 - a. evaluation of changes in animal species abundance and composition
 - b. evaluation of changes in plan wildlife species abundance and composition
 - c. mortality sink analysis
 - d. evaluation of changes in exotic species diversity and abundance
 - e. evaluation of wildlife movement corridors
 - f. evaluation of human-wildlife interface issues
- D. Data Gap Identification and Future Research Needs Plan

VIII. FUNDING

- A. Financial Assurance
- B. Financing Strategy

IX. GLOSSARY

■ Explanation of Plan Scope

Executive Summary

The executive summary should be a concise and convenient description of the final Habitat Plan.

Introduction

Due to the breadth and complexity of a territory wide Habitat Plan for the RMC, a thorough introductory section is needed.

Background/Plan Purpose

It would be very helpful to include a section at the beginning of the Plan explaining the circumstances that served as the impetus for an RMC Habitat Plan. This would also be an ideal location for a concise description of the Plan purpose that would be more fully described in vision and goals and objectives.

Regulatory Framework

The RMC Habitat Plan should describe, early in the document, the complex regulatory framework in which the RMC operates. This section should describe how implementation of an RMC plan will fit into the existing regulatory framework, and clarify what RMC can and cannot do inside city boundaries or unincorporated County land. Since wording in the authoring legislation for the RMC greatly limits the RMC's authority within city boundaries, this section can reassure cities that RMC activities will not interfere with the activities of the cities within RMC territory.

The Regulatory Framework section should also describe how RMC work would coordinate with other entities involved in similar or related work, such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Angeles National Forest, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game, as well as the various departments of Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

Plan Area

A map and a text description should identify all areas addressed by the RMC Habitat Plan.

Community Participation

Any large-scale plan for a region as politically diverse as RMC territory should incorporate stakeholder participation. A community participation process can provide an invaluable venue for the distillation of a common vision for the region that will be addressed by a plan. Such participation also provides a crucial opportunity to generate support for a plan under development, and minimize potential lawsuits in opposition of a plan or planning process. The RMC Habitat Plan should describe in some detail the community participation process that will have been incorporated into development of the plan.

Vision

The vision section of a plan is one of the most important sections, because it describes the final end result to be realized at the conclusion of the implementation of a plan. A vision statement differs from goals and objectives. Rather than describing tasks that must be accomplished, a vision statement illustrates a dream, paints a picture of transformed landscapes. A strong vision statement has great potential to sell the plan purpose to future readers of the plan.

Goals/Objectives

All plans contain goals and objectives. Goals describe quantifiable accomplishments needed to realize a vision. Objectives are quantifiable tasks needed to achieve goals. Together, the goals and objectives form the skeleton of the work plan that will transform the region.

Inventory/Analysis

Each section of the RMC Habitat Plan should be substantiated by thoroughly researched, inventoried and analyzed material embodied in the inventory and analysis section of the Plan. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the inventory and analysis section. A growing body of research indicates that many habitat conservation plans have failed because of inadequate or incomplete basic research. Because habitat plans usually deal with habitats containing rare or endangered species, the stakes involved with these plans can be very high—sometimes failure of a plan can mean extinction or local extirpation of a species. A thorough inventory and analysis process is also important because it will assemble and distill vital information that can be utilized in RMC work prior to completion of the Habitat Plan itself.

Natural Resources & Processes Inventory & Analysis

In its discussions, the Habitat Subcommittee concluded that the most effective way to restore healthy, self-sustaining habitat would be to restore the natural processes required by natural habitats. Otherwise, RMC will be creating a vast resource-consuming garden network containing native plants. The inventory and analysis sections of the RMC Plan should examine historic and existing hydrology, fluvial geomorphology, vegetation, wildlife and other natural processes that impact the region's habitats, such as climate, erosion, sediment transport, flood cycles, fire cycles, and tectonic activity. Human Impacts on natural resources and processes must also be studied and understood, because conservation and restoration cannot succeed unless impacts caused by human development and use are successfully anticipated and managed.

Human Dimensions

The RMC Habitat Plan must inventory and analyze certain human dimensions in order to effectively plan habitat. Due to the complex regulatory framework in which RMC operates, myriad political jurisdictions must be identified and mapped. Development of the Habitat Plan must then consider the legal parameters associated with different counties, cities and special districts to ensure that the completed RMC Habitat Plan is politically feasible.

Existing land uses must also be mapped and analyzed because most land uses impact adjacent natural resources. Planning and site design offer many opportunities to minimize impacts associated with surrounding land uses once they have been identified and mapped.

Plan

The plan section of the RMC Habitat plan should describe the mix of actions and corrective measures to be undertaken by the RMC to accomplish the goals and objectives that were developed to achieve the RMC's vision for habitat and wildlife resources within its territory. Each plan component must be substantiated by information contained in the inventory and analysis section.

Plan Scales

The RMC Habitat Plan must operate on several scales because natural processes operate at different scales. The Plan should address large-scale phenomena, such as wildlife movement patterns, on a territory wide scale. The building blocks of a territory wide habitat network are the patches and corridors that comprise and link RMC habitat areas. An overarching goal, for example, may be to enable movement of mammal species between Angeles National Forest and Cleveland National Forest, but on a patch-corridor scale the work

involves incremental linkages. At a patch-corridor network scale, the plan must determine how to facilitate movement of wildlife from San Gabriel Canyon, to Santa Fe Dam, to Whittier Narrows, the Puente Hills, the Chino Hills and then into Cleveland National Forest. The final scale at which the RMC Habitat Plan must operate is the site-scale. Although site planning will be an incremental parcel-by-parcel process, the plan should describe a systematic method for inventory and analysis of the natural resources. The Plan should also describe a site-scale plan development process. In this way, individual projects can be harmonized with the Habitat Plan's larger vision for the territory as a whole and insure continuity among RMC projects.

Natural Processes, Habitat and Wildlife

This section embodies the heart of the RMC Habitat Plan. It is worth mentioning again, that natural processes are included in this section, because RMC habitat can and should be more than high-maintenance gardens of native plants. If natural processes can be restored, RMC habitat can be largely self-sustaining. The Natural Processes, Habitat and Wildlife section should describe which natural processes will be preserved and restored, and what tasks must be accomplished to achieve those objectives. One of the most significant processes that will be addressed is hydrology, since habitat and wildlife require water. The plan must address how water will reach the vegetation and wildlife that will comprise RMC habitat.

In the vegetation section the plan should draw upon the inventory and analysis sections to identify the range of vegetation types that originally existed within RMC territory. The plan should then describe a strategy for the preservation, restoration or creation of historic vegetation types within RMC territory. The plan may go further, planning and mapping the locations where RMC intends to establish or maintain the various vegetation types. The vegetation section must also address connectivity—since many wildlife species will not travel through unvegetated areas between habitat patches—and the removal and management of invasive exotic plant species. Finally, the vegetation section must address interface issues associated with human impacts on sustainable natural vegetation, such as fire suppression, which ultimately renders habitat areas unproductive and of little value to wildlife.

Habitat without wildlife is merely vegetation. In the wildlife section, the RMC Habitat Plan must identify plan species, meaning the animal species that the RMC habitat plan will attempt to benefit. Typically, design species include rare and endangered species, other species whose relative populations impact rare and endangered species, and species whose populations play an important role in species composition within wildlife communities. The wildlife section of the Plan must then describe a strategy for the preservation or recovery of each of the design species. The wildlife section must analyze habitat connectivity with regard to each plan species, examine exotic animal species management, and mortality sink potential. The mortality sink issue is especially critical in urban scenarios, since attractive habitat in urban places has greater potential to function as a death trap for wildlife than habitat located in more remote areas. The wildlife section of the Plan should also address the human-wildlife interface, presenting strategies to protect both the animals and humans that visit or live near the natural areas in the hills and mountains of RMC territory.

Adaptive Management and Habitat Plan Update and Modification Process

The RMC Habitat Plan must be a living document. It is well known that the best research will contain errors and omissions, and that even perfectly executed research becomes obsolete with time, as conditions continue to change. The Habitat Plan must, therefore, be modified and updated based upon the results of a rigorous monitoring program. This process, known as Adaptive Management, is currently the soundest approach for planning efforts that contain a significant habitat conservation element. All plans require updating, but a habitat plan typically requires more frequent and more rigorous updating because there is often so little existing data verifying the effectiveness of current habitat planning work. This is especially true in urban areas like RMC territory, where wildlife conservation planning is still in its infancy. There is genuine concern that habitat created in urban areas will become mortality sinks—successfully attracting design species, but possessing an elevated mortality rate due to unforeseen circumstances. The end result of a mortality sink is that well-intentioned habitat further imperils already fragile wildlife populations. At the present time, habitat

conservation planning must proceed with the newest and best available information, and then carefully monitor the impacts each project has on wildlife.

Implementation Plan

Plan implementation is the critical nexus between a habitat plan and habitat. The RMC Habitat Plan should carefully chart a realistic course for its implementation, or the plan will be of little ultimate use. Because land ownership and land use designations can change rapidly, the Implementation Plan will likely require more frequent updating than the rest of the Habitat Plan, possibly every 3-5 years.

The Implementation Plan should describe a project-by-project process for the achievement of RMC's vision for habitat within its territory. This process should weave habitat objectives into all RMC projects. The Implementation Plan should also identify priorities for RMC habitat, while recognizing the need for the RMC to retain the flexibility to consider other opportunities that may arise.

Implementation Scales

As with the plan itself, implementation must take place at different scales. Although implementation focuses on the project-by-project site-scale work, care must be taken to observe the plan objectives relating to RMC territory as a whole, and patch-corridor network development. The larger scale considerations must be manifested in acquisition decisions and site planning and design.

Implementation Strategies

This section should describe a sequential course of action for the conservation, restoration, creation and connection of RMC habitat.

Implementation Cost

The RMC Habitat Plan may attempt to determine implementation costs. Since the Habitat Plan will likely take decades to fully implement, an implementation cost section may not be feasible.

Phasing Options

Due to budgetary considerations, especially with regard to planning activity, RMC might need to develop its Habitat Plan in phases. The first phase would be the regional inventory and analysis phase. This phase is needed as soon as possible in order to inform RMC work already underway. A Plan could easily be developed at a later date, provided that it is not executed so much later that the inventory and analysis sections are not longer relevant. A Plan Implementation Strategy and Management/Monitoring and Research Plan could also be developed at a later date. However, even in the absence of a Management/Monitoring and Research Plan, monitoring and research should begin as soon as RMC completes its first project to ensure that negative impacts to habitat and wildlife caused by new RMC projects are detected and corrected at the earliest possible time.

Impacts/CEQA/EIR

The RMC Habitat Plan may or may not require a CEQA process depending on the contents of the final plan scope that is sent out to bid. As the RMC Staff prepares a Request for Proposal for the RMC Habitat Plan, legal council will need to advise on the necessity of CEQA based upon the final plan scope.

Management/Monitoring/Research

As discussed earlier, the RMC Habitat Plan should incorporate an Adaptive Management Procedure that will utilize a standardized monitoring plan for all RMC projects. Impacts to habitat, adjacent habitat, and wildlife populations contained in them must be recorded, and analyzed. When negative impacts or insubstantial

positive impacts are recorded, either the Plan must be modified, or the site-scale planning process must be modified, or both.

RMC projects should undergo both implementation monitoring and effectiveness monitoring. Implementation monitoring will examine projects to insure that they were developed according to the Habitat Plan and the site-scale plan developed for the specific project under review. Effectiveness monitoring will be ongoing and will attempt to determine if the project is helping to achieve RMC goals for habitat or whether it is having any negative impacts.

Effectiveness monitoring of RMC projects should consider, at a minimum, changes in vegetation—plant species and plant communities abundance and composition, changes in plant species and communities abundance and composition, changes in exotic plant species diversity and abundance, evaluation of changes in critical existing and potential habitat areas, changes in habitat patch number, size, configuration, distribution and connectivity, changes in animal species abundance and composition, evaluation of changes in plant wildlife species abundance and composition, mortality sink analysis, evaluation of changes in exotic animal species diversity and abundance, and evaluation of wildlife movement corridors.

Because of the quantity of vital information that is currently unavailable, especially information relevant specifically to RMC territory, a Data Gap Identification and Future Research Needs Plan might be a very helpful additional tool to guide ongoing monitoring efforts, and Habitat Plan updates. Many information gaps are known, such as the dimensions of wildlife movement corridors that are required by different native wildlife species. Other information gaps should be identified, and a plan for future research should seek to develop this important information.

Funding

RMC may elect to include in its Habitat Plan a section about funding strategies for Plan Implementation. This strategy can also be developed internally by RMC Staff.

Glossary

A glossary of terms used in the Plan will be an invaluable tool for the future audience of the Plan.

■ Future of RMC Habitat

The RMC has a great opportunity to emerge as the leader in regional habitat conservation, through the creation of an objective, scientifically credible plan and consensus-building leadership. The RMC can unite and coordinate the myriad other entities involved with habitat conservation and restoration throughout the region, and lead a transformation of the region's natural resources and open space. To succeed, the RMC should carefully consider, in all its work, the rich, but fragile natural resources abundant in the habitats within RMC territory. Through dedicated, scientifically based habitat conservation and restoration work, the RMC can create a territory-wide network of functioning habitats that can preserve and restore the unique features of the region's natural heritage. The RMC will have few other opportunities to make equally significant or unique contributions. The RMC must embark upon its habitat conservation and restoration activities as soon as possible, however. Degraded and precarious natural resources continue to experience decline throughout RMC territory. Unless immediate action is taken, preservation and restoration efforts will come too late for some of RMC's most imperiled species and resources.

(The appendices from the report of the Habitat Subcommittee are contained in the Appendix to this Final Report.)

C. MOUNTAINS, HILLS, AND FOOTHILLS

Common Ground provided the following direction:

Mountains, Foothills and Hills Plan(s): To identify parcels and areas of land within the mountains, foothills, hills that should be preserved and protected, comprehensive plan(s) are needed to identify priorities, funding and implementation strategies. Potential partners include: the foothill communities of the San Gabriel Mountains, and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments; the communities; local conservancies, agencies, and groups; and the Councils of Government surrounding and encompassing the Whittier/Puente/Chino/ San Jose Hills complex; and the communities surrounding the Glendale Narrows and the Verdugo Mountains.

As part of the preparatory work for the Working Group, the consultant team developed the following matrix to assist the Working Group in their consideration of this topic.

Mountains, Hills, and Foothills

Agencies: California State Parks, LA and OC County Parks, Wildlife Conservation Board, Coastal Conservancy

Potential Resource Partners: TBD

Stakeholders: Foothill communities of the San Gabriel Mountains; the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments; local conservancies; agencies; and groups; and the Councils of Government near Whittier/Puente/ Chino/San Jose Hills complex, the Glendale Narrows and the Verdugo Mountains

Conceptual Scope: To identify parcels and areas of land within the mountains, foothills, hills that should be preserved and protected, comprehensive plan(s) are needed to identify priorities, funding and implementation strategies.

Issues: What factors must be considered in developing priorities for acquisition?

Is habitat planning a prerequisite to development of priorities?

(The following report from the Habitat Subcommittee was provided by Calvin R. Abe Associates.)

■ Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee's vision for RMC Habitat

The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee envisions large, diverse, well-connected habitat areas throughout the hills and mountains in RMC territory. These habitats will contain the full spectrum of native vegetation types, plant species, wildlife communities and wildlife species in a self-sustaining balance. RMC habitat will contain the highest degree of natural function possible requiring minimal maintenance. The Habitat in the hills and mountains, containing rich and diverse wildlife, will become a treasured feature in RMC territory. Unique educational and recreational amenities for the public and additional features designed to enhance regional water quality, and conservation and flood management will be sensitively incorporated into the RMC mountains, hills and foothills open space network. Abundant native vegetation and wildlife can function as an outdoor laboratory and classroom for students of all ages and the community at large. Bikeways and networks of hiking and equestrian trails can provide rich recreational experiences, linking RMC lands in the mountains, hills and foothills, in elsewhere in RMC territory. Since the desire to experience open space and natural areas is chiefly responsible for the desire to recreate in the hills and

mountains, all amenities provided for human education and recreation will be incorporated with the highest degree of care to prevent compromising the integrity of these natural features.

■ Purpose

The purpose of an RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan is to create a blueprint for the development of the territory-wide network of open space described in the vision above. A well crafted Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan can guide not only the large-scale creation of the open space network that is envisioned, but can also provide a project scale process for maximization of habitat, watershed management, education and recreation components of each RMC project. An objective, scientifically credible plan can also provide leadership to the myriad other entities involved with these components of open space conservation and restoration, and can describe how these efforts might be coordinated.

■ Importance

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Act directs the Conservancy (RMC) to “...acquire and manage public lands...to provide open-space, low-impact recreational and educational uses, water conservation, watershed improvement, wildlife and habitat restoration and protection...” Of all the tasks assigned to the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) the most unique potential contribution by the RMC would be regional preservation, restoration and reconnection of the region’s abundant, but fragile and imperiled natural resources. It is also by far the most difficult of all of the RMC’s aspirations for the lands within its territory.

The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee believes that habitat, more than any other asset, is the resource that distinguishes the hills and mountains of RMC territory from other areas. RMC work in other locations will involve significant land use conversion, remediation, and restoration. Many lands in the hills and mountains will involve little more than acquisition, and preservation, because many lands in the hills and mountains already contain high quality habitat. The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee agrees with the Habitat Subcommittee that habitat issues must always be among the primary considerations in RMC work. The natural areas located in the hills and mountains of RMC territory are especially important for several reasons. Beyond providing vital habitat to the region’s diverse, but declining wildlife species, the natural hillsides clean our air, provide one third of our water, provide vast recreational and educational opportunities, and provide the Los Angeles basin its famous mountainous backdrop, outstanding viewsheds and sense of place. The natural hills and mountains can only provide these many valuable resources if the natural habitats that remain are preserved.

The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee urges the RMC to consider habitat issues first, in all its work, and strive to constantly embrace a territory-wide perspective with regard to habitat issues, since survival of so many animal species depends on this sort of regional approach. The Subcommittee also encourages the RMC to evaluate possible advantages conservation activities may have over restoration work. The state of a parcel of land in need of dramatic restoration is not likely to deteriorate to a great extent in a matter of a few years. In that same period of time, hundreds of acres of unpreserved high quality habitat can be transformed into hillside housing developments, creating many new miles of interface between natural areas and human development, and generating impacts that penetrate up to a mile inside of adjacent areas that might have been nearly pristine. It is also generally recognized that even the best restoration efforts cannot equal the degree of natural function and biodiversity found on effectively preserved habitat. RMC projects will have many opportunities to plan for and sensitively incorporate recreational and educational amenities. If habitat issues are not addressed first, however, many opportunities for habitat and wildlife will be lost, and RMC projects will be little more than city parks with recreation opportunities indistinguishable from other city parks, and with minimal educational value. If habitat is effectively preserved, educational and interpretive materials about RMC open space can tout RMC success stories about RMC habitat and wildlife preservation, restoration and recovery. Inadequately addressed, RMC activities might introduce recreational

features that increase human impacts on habitat areas and actually hasten the demise of fragile species struggling for survival.

Many governmental entities work full time on water related issues such as water conservation, flood management and water quality. The County and every city within RMC territory engages in recreational and education programs. Numerous organizations and conservancies, as well as county and city governments actively work to preserve and restore natural resources. Local conservancies in particular have been very active within their territories in conservation and restoration work. The RMC, however, is uniquely qualified to embark upon the ambitious task of regional preservation and restoration of open space and natural resources so vital to the survival of many plant and animal species, and to the accomplishment of regional goals for watershed management, and quality of life for the region's dense human population. A territory-wide network of open space should be RMC's first and highest priority for the mountains, hills and foothills in RMC territory. Habitat issues must be addressed first, because the requirements of plant and animal species are more exacting than requirements for educational and recreational amenities for humans. Properly planned and implemented, preservation and restoration of habitat and wildlife populations can enhance each of the RMC's other goals: public open space, low-impact recreation, education, water conservation and watershed improvement. If not prioritized and carefully planned first, however, achievement of each of the other RMC goals can potentially damage existing habitat and wildlife, limit future potential preservation and restoration efforts, and greatly reduce the value of RMC lands for watershed management, education and recreation. Many entities are actively pursuing preservation and restoration of open space, but no entity has embarked upon the ambitious, yet urgently needed task of regional open space planning. RMC can play a key leadership role in regional open space planning, preservation and restoration, unifying and coordinating other preservation and restoration efforts.

■ Urgency

RMC conservation and preservation efforts in the hills and mountains are urgently needed. Nearly all of RMC goals require open space that can be planned, developed and maintained as RMC lands; and nearly all of the open space in RMC territory is located in these upland areas. The most pressing issue in the hills and mountains is the preservation and restoration of the habitat, which is home to many wildlife species. Careful consideration of habitat issues is urgently needed in RMC work for two reasons. First, RMC has started doing actual on-the-ground projects, which must address habitat issues. Second, several plant communities and plant and animal species that currently exist within RMC territory are teetering on the brink of extinction, and many additional communities and species are suffering dramatic decline as human development continues to devour the unprotected hillsides that remain. Although U.S. Fish and Wildlife is chiefly responsible for species recovery, the RMC has many opportunities to assist in this critical effort. Preservation and restoration of habitat is also critical to RMC aspirations for watershed management, education and recreation, since all of these goals depend to some extent upon RMC's success in preserving open space that contains native habitat.

■ Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee Report

In the remaining sections of this report, the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee offers the RMC a Plan Scope for a future RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan. In the section that follows, scope items are described. Although the purpose of many scope items will be obvious, the purpose of other items may not be as clear. The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee debated several of these topics extensively, and the substance of these discussions will greatly enhance the reader's understanding and appreciation of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan Scope.

The appendices contain the final Mountains, Hills and Foothills Recommendations as approved by the Working Group, a description of the information database effort initiated jointly by the Habitat and Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittees. Two inventories were also developed jointly as informational tools designed to assist the RMC planning efforts, as well as other RMC activities—especially prior to

completion of the planning work. The first of these two inventories presents plans and studies relevant to habitat and mountains, hills and foothills issues. The subsequent section presents an inventory of potential resource partners, which are entities that might potentially contribute funding, expertise or other assistance to RMC activities, especially commencement of the Habitat and Mountains, Hills and Foothills planning efforts. To avoid duplication, these inventories are presented only once, in the appendices to the Habitat Subcommittee Report.

■ Recommended RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan Scope

Plan Scope

It should be noted that, in the event that the RMC completes its Habitat Plan prior to the commencement of a Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, many portions in the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan's inventory and analysis section pertaining to natural resources would already have been done in the Habitat Plan.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Background/Overview
- B. Regulatory Framework
- C. Plan Purpose
- D. Community Participation
- E. Vision
- F. Goals/Objectives
- G. Plan Area

III. INVENTORY/ANALYSIS

- A. Natural Resources & Processes Inventory & Analysis
 - 1. Hydrology/Fluvial Geomorphology
 - a. water supply/conservation
 - b. flood management
 - c. water quality
 - d. sediment transport
 - 2. Vegetation
 - a. historic vegetation—species and plant communities, species composition/biodiversity
 - b. existing vegetation—species and plant communities, species composition/biodiversity
 - c. potential vegetation—species and plant communities, species composition/biodiversity
 - d. plan plant species and communities
 - e. critical existing and potential habitat areas
 - 3. Wildlife
 - a. historic species and species composition
 - b. existing species and species composition
 - c. protected species
 - d. exotic species
 - e. plan wildlife species
 - f. critical existing and potential wildlife patches

- g. habitat fragmentation
 - h. critical wildlife movement corridors
 - 4. Natural Processes and their Impacts on Habitat and Wildlife
 - a. climate
 - b. erosion and sediment transport
 - c. fire cycle
 - d. flood cycle
 - e. seismic activity
 - 5. Interface and Human Impacts Analysis
 - a. human-wildlife interface
 - b. hydrologic modifications
 - c. sediment management practices
 - d. fire suppression
 - e. adjacent landscaping
 - f. adjacent land uses
 - B. Human Dimensions
 - 1. Political Jurisdictions
 - 2. Demographic Profile and Analysis
 - 3. Community Needs Assessment
 - 4. Analysis of Existing Land Use
 - a. residential
 - b. recreation
 - c. commercial/industrial
 - d. infrastructure
 - C. Open Space Inventory
 - 1. Inventory of Open Spaces
 - 2. Inventory of key existing and potential connections and linkages
 - 3. Inventory of river and tributary related open spaces in the hills and mountains
- IV. Plan**
- A. Plan Scales
 - 1. Territory-Wide
 - 2. Patch-Corridor Network
 - 3. Site-scale
 - B. Natural Processes, Habitat and Wildlife
 - 1. Hydrology, Fluvial Geomorphology and Natural Processes
 - a. water supply/conservation
 - b. flood management
 - c. water quality
 - d. sediment transport
 - 2. Vegetation
 - a. vegetation plan—species and plant communities
 - b. protected species and plant communities strategies
 - c. vegetation patches and linkages
 - d. exotic species management
 - e. project-scale vegetation planning process
 - 3. Wildlife
 - a. wildlife plan—species and species composition
 - b. protected species strategies
 - c. wildlife patches and linkages
 - d. mortality sink analysis

- e. exotic species management
- f. project-scale wildlife planning process
- 4. Interface and Human Impacts Management
 - a. human-wildlife interface
 - b. hydrologic modifications plan
 - c. sediment management practices
 - d. fire suppression policy

C. Human Uses

- 1. Access
- 2. Education
- 3. Recreation
 - a. passive
 - b. active
- 4. Linkages to Other Open Space
 - a. trails
 - b. bikeways
 - c. equestrian trails
- 5. Project-Scale Human Use Planning Process

D. Interface with Surrounding Land Uses

- 1. Residential
- 2. Commercial/Industrial
- 3. Infrastructure
- 4. Transportation

E. Mountains, Hills and Foothills Education Program

- 1. School Program
- 2. Mountains, Hills and Foothills Resident's Program
- 3. Recreational Users Program

F. Adaptive Management and Habitat Plan Update and Modification Process

- 1. Monitoring and Assessment Program
- 2. Plan Evaluation Process
- 3. Plan Update and Modification Process

V. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A. Implementation Scales

- 1. Territory-Wide
- 2. Patch-Corridor Network
- 3. Site-scale

B. Implementation Strategies

C. Implementation Cost

D. Phasing Options

- 1. Inventory and Analysis
- 2. Plan
- 3. Plan Implementation

VI. IMPACTS/CEQA/EIR

A. Affected Environments and Impacts

B. Compliance

C. Changed Circumstances

D. Clarifications

VII. MANAGEMENT/MONITORING/RESEARCH

- A. Adaptive Management Plan
 - 1. Territory-Wide
 - 2. Project-Scale
- B. Monitoring Plan
 - 1. Scales
 - a. territory-wide
 - b. project-scale
 - 2. Implementation Monitoring Plan
 - 3. Effectiveness Monitoring Plan
- C. Evaluation Parameters
 - 1. Vegetation
 - a. evaluation of changes in vegetation—plant species and plant communities abundance and composition
 - b. evaluation of changes in plant species and communities abundance and composition
 - c. evaluation of changes in exotic plant species diversity and abundance
 - d. evaluation of changes in critical existing and potential habitat areas
 - e. evaluation of changes in habitat patch number, size, configuration, distribution and connectivity
 - 2. Wildlife
 - a. evaluation of changes in animal species abundance and composition
 - b. evaluation of changes in plant wildlife species abundance and composition
 - c. mortality sink analysis
 - d. evaluation of changes in exotic species diversity and abundance
 - e. evaluation of wildlife movement corridors
 - f. evaluation of human-wildlife interface issues
 - 3. Human Dimensions
 - a. evaluation of access to open space and recreation facilities
 - b. evaluation of educational programs and facilities
 - c. evaluation of recreational facilities
 - d. evaluation of trail, bikeway and equestrian path networks
 - e. analysis of impacts from human use on vegetation and wildlife
- D. Data Gap Identification and Future Research Needs Plan

VIII. FUNDING

- A. Financial Assurance
- B. Financing Strategy

IX. GLOSSARY**■ Explanation of Plan Scope*****Executive Summary***

The executive summary should be a concise and convenient description of the final Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan.

Introduction

Due to the breadth and complexity of a territory-wide Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan for the RMC, a thorough introductory section is needed.

Background/Plan Purpose

It would be very helpful to include a section at the beginning of the Plan explaining the circumstances that served as the impetus for an RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan. This would also be an ideal location for a concise description of the Plan purpose that would be more fully described in vision and goals and objectives.

Regulatory Framework

The RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should describe, early in the document, the complex regulatory framework in which the RMC operates. This section should describe how implementation of an RMC plan will fit into the existing regulatory framework, and clarify what RMC can and cannot do inside city boundaries or unincorporated County land. Since wording in the authoring legislation for the RMC greatly limits the RMC's authority within city boundaries, this section can reassure cities that RMC activities will not interfere with the activities of the cities within RMC territory.

The Regulatory Framework section should also describe how RMC work will coordinate with other entities involved in similar or related work, such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Angeles National Forest, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game, as well as the various departments of Los Angeles and Orange Counties.

Plan Area

A map and a text description should identify all areas addressed by the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan.

Community Participation

Any large-scale plan for a region as politically diverse as RMC territory should incorporate stakeholder participation. A community participation process can provide an invaluable venue for the distillation of a common vision for the region that will be addressed by a plan. Such participation also provides a crucial opportunity to generate support for a plan under development, and minimize potential lawsuits in opposition of a plan or planning process. The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should describe in some detail the community participation process that will have been incorporated into development of the plan.

Vision

The vision section of a plan is one of the most important sections, because it describes the final end result to be realized at the conclusion of the implementation of a plan. A vision statement differs from goals and objectives. Rather than describing tasks that must be accomplished, a vision statement illustrates a dream, paints a picture of transformed landscapes. A strong vision statement has great potential to sell the plan purpose to future readers of the plan.

Goals/Objectives

All plans contain goals and objectives. Goals describe quantifiable accomplishments needed to realize a vision. Objectives are quantifiable tasks needed to achieve goals. Together, the goals and objectives form the skeleton of the work plan that will transform the region.

Inventory/Analysis

Each section of the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should be substantiated by thoroughly researched, inventoried and analyzed material embodied in the inventory and analysis section of the Plan. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the inventory and analysis section. A growing body of research indicates that many planning efforts have failed because of inadequate or incomplete basic research. Because Plans with significant habitat components often deal with habitats containing rare or endangered species, the stakes involved with these plans can be very high—sometimes failure of a plan can mean extinction or local

extirpation of a species. A thorough inventory and analysis process is also important because it will assemble and distill vital information that can be utilized in RMC work prior to completion of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan itself. It should be noted: if a Habitat Plan is completed prior to the commencement of a Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, many portions of the inventory and analysis from the Habitat Plan can be directly incorporated into the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan.

Natural Resources & Processes Inventory & Analysis

In its discussions, the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee concluded that habitat was the most valuable resource in the hills and mountains of RMC territory in terms of RMC conservation and restoration activity. The Subcommittee also concluded that the most effective way to restore healthy, self-sustaining habitat would be to restore the natural processes required by natural habitats. Otherwise, RMC will be creating a vast resource-consuming garden network containing native plants. The inventory and analysis sections of the RMC Plan should examine historic and existing hydrology, fluvial geomorphology, vegetation, wildlife and other natural processes that impact the region's habitats, such as climate, erosion, sediment transport, flood cycles, fire cycles, and tectonic activity. Human Impacts on natural resources and processes must also be studied and understood, because conservation and restoration cannot succeed unless impacts caused by human development and use are successfully anticipated and managed. The human-wildlife interface must also be studied both to protect wildlife from adjacent human development and to protect residents from potentially dangerous wayward animals that can enter urban areas adjacent to natural habitats. In addition to studying impacts of surrounding land uses, the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan must also address impacts associated with on-site human use. Many of the natural landscapes in the mountains and hills are used by hikers, mountains bikers, equestrians and residents jogging or walking their dogs. Impacts of all uses must be identified and analyzed.

Human Dimensions

In order to create an effective Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, the RMC must inventory and analyze certain human dimensions. Due to the complex regulatory framework in which RMC operates, myriad political jurisdictions must be identified and mapped. Development of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan must then consider the legal parameters associated with different counties, cities and special districts to ensure that the completed RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan is politically feasible.

Existing land uses must also be mapped and analyzed because most land uses impact adjacent natural resources. Planning and site design offer many opportunities to minimize impacts associated with surrounding land uses once they have been identified and mapped.

A Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should also develop a demographic profile and conduct a community needs assessment to try to determine the mix of educational and recreational amenities that would be appropriate for incorporation into RMC projects located in the hills and mountains.

Plan

The plan section of the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should describe the mix of actions and corrective measures to be undertaken by the RMC to accomplish the goals and objectives that were developed to achieve the RMC's vision for the hills and mountains within its territory. Each plan component must be substantiated by information contained in the inventory and analysis section.

Plan Scales

The RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should operate on several scales because the natural processes at work in the hills and mountains operate at differing scales. Amenities that might be provided to the public in the hills and mountains would also likely be developed at different scales as well. The Plan should address large-scale phenomena and amenities, such as wildlife movement patterns or regional bikeway networks, on a

territory wide scale. The building blocks of a territory wide Mountains, Hills and Foothills open space network are the patches and corridors that comprise and link RMC habitat areas, and parks and linkages that make up the parkway and trails networks. The final scale at which the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan must operate is the site-scale. Although site planning will be an incremental parcel-by-parcel process, the plan should describe a systematic method for inventory and analysis of the natural resources and human dimensions. The Plan should also describe a site-scale plan development process. In this way, individual projects can be harmonized with the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan's larger vision for the territory as a whole and insure continuity among RMC projects.

Natural Processes, Habitat and Wildlife

The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee feels strongly that conservation, restoration and reconnection off habitat should be RMC's highest priority in the hills and mountains within its territory. The Subcommittee also believes that most RMC projects in the hills and mountains can accommodate educational and recreation facilities, but strenuously urges RMC to address the habitat and wildlife issues first. It is well known in habitat conservation planning that it is easier to sensitively incorporate educational and recreational facilities into natural areas than it is to create quality wildlife sustaining habitat around additional facilities that have been randomly located or designed without consideration of the habitat potential of the property.

The first section of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should focus on habitat and habitat related issues. This section is intended to embody the heart of the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan. It is worth mentioning again, that natural processes are included in this section, because RMC habitat can and should be more than high-maintenance gardens of native plants. If natural processes can be restored, RMC habitat can be largely self-sustaining. Wildlife is mentioned in this section because habitat without wildlife is merely vegetation. Habitat containing rich, diverse wildlife will also be a far more valuable recreational and education asset to the region. The Natural Processes, Habitat and Wildlife section should describe which natural processes will be preserved and restored, and what tasks must be accomplished to achieve those objectives. One of the most significant processes that will be addressed is hydrology, since habitat and wildlife require water. The plan must address how water will reach the vegetation and wildlife that will comprise RMC habitat.

In the vegetation section the plan should draw upon the inventory and analysis sections to identify the range of vegetation types that originally existed within the hills and mountains of RMC territory. The plan should then describe a strategy for the preservation, restoration or creation of these historic vegetation types. The plan may go further, planning and mapping the locations where RMC intends to establish or maintain the various vegetation types. The vegetation section must also address connectivity—since many wildlife species will not travel through unvegetated areas between habitat patches—and the removal and management of invasive exotic plant species. Finally, the vegetation section must address interface issues associated with human impacts on sustainable natural vegetation, such as fire suppression, which ultimately renders habitat areas unproductive and of little value to wildlife. Interface issues associated with human encroachment on natural areas are more acute in the hills and mountains than anywhere else in RMC territory.

Habitat without wildlife is merely vegetation. In the wildlife section, the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan must identify plan species, meaning the animal species that the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Planning efforts will attempt to benefit. Typically, design species include rare and endangered species, other species whose relative populations impact rare and endangered species, and species whose populations play an important role in species composition within wildlife communities. The wildlife section of the Plan must then describe a strategy for the preservation or recovery of each of the design species. The wildlife section must analyze habitat connectivity with regard to each plan species, examine exotic animal species management, and mortality sink potential. The mortality sink issue is especially critical in urban scenarios, since attractive habitat in urban places has greater potential to function as a death trap for wildlife

than habitat located in more remote areas. The wildlife section of the Plan should also address the human-wildlife interface, presenting strategies to protect both the animals and humans that visit or live near the natural areas in the hills and mountains of RMC territory.

Human Uses

The next section off the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan must address human use of RMC lands located in the hills and mountains. Once the habitat issues have been resolved by the plan, appropriate access points will become obvious. Access points are nodes of heavy human use and activity, which must be located away from sensitive habitat areas like nesting habitats for endangered birds. In a similar fashion, other human uses, such as education and recreation can be sited according to the magnitude of the anticipated impacts associated with that use. Low impact uses, such as hiking trails, might potentially skirt sensitive areas and include viewing platforms carefully located and designed for unobtrusive wildlife observation. Parking lots might alternatively be placed adjacent to a busy neighboring land uses like transportation corridors to function as a type of buffer zone.

Mountains, Hills and Foothills Education Program

The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Subcommittee identified a great need to educate residents and visitors to the hills and mountains within RMC territory. Since many of the amenities RMC might make available to the public in the hills and mountains will likely be regional amenities, some of the educational efforts might need to be territory wide.

School children are an obvious educational target, because environmental education can readily be integrated into existing curricula. Education efforts can also target visitors to RMC lands. At a minimum, most, if not all RMC lands opened to the public should contain an information kiosk presenting information about how to appreciate the land with minimal impact. The information should be appealing, easy to understand and presented in at least two languages, English and Spanish. Additional signage within a site could reinforce these important messages, reminding visitors to stay on trails, to stay out of revegetation areas, or not to pick endangered flowers.

A final educational program could be aimed at businesses and residences that exist in or near natural areas. Many conflicts between human development and natural systems occur within these interface zones. Business and residences should be urged to landscape their properties appropriately, avoiding invasive exotic species, and selecting less flammable local native plants instead. Residents especially must be taught to keep pets and small children indoors, unless well supervised, due to the potential dangers associated with wildlife located in or near natural areas. Pets should also be kept inside to prevent them from predating upon smaller wildlife species, such as native birds.

Adaptive Management and Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan Update and Modification Process

The RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan must be a living document. It is well known that the best research will contain errors and omissions, and that even perfectly executed research becomes obsolete with time as conditions continue to change. The Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan must, therefore, be modified and updated based upon the results of a rigorous monitoring program. This process, known as Adaptive Management, is currently the soundest approach for planning efforts that contain a significant habitat conservation element. All plans require updating, but a Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan may require more frequent and more rigorous updating because there is so little existing data verifying the effectiveness of current habitat planning work. This is especially true in urban areas like RMC territory, where wildlife conservation planning is still in its infancy. There is genuine concern that habitat created in urban areas will become mortality sinks—successfully attracting design species, but possessing an elevated mortality rate due to unforeseen circumstance. The end result of a mortality sink is that well-intentioned habitat further imperils already fragile wildlife populations. At the present time, habitat conservation planning must proceed

with the newest and best available information, and then carefully monitor the impacts each project has on wildlife. Since RMC lands in the hills and mountains will most often contain other uses, it will be very important to document impacts associated with these other uses so that site design modifications can be made, and so that future RMC projects can be planned and designed differently.

Implementation Plan

Plan implementation is the critical nexus between a Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan and well planned and designed RMC projects in the hills and mountains of RMC territory. The RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should carefully chart a realistic course for its implementation, or the plan will be of little ultimate use. Because land ownership and land use designations can change rapidly, the Implementation Plan will likely require more frequent updating than the rest of the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, possibly every 3-5 years.

The Implementation Plan should describe a project-by-project process for the achievement of RMC's vision for open space in the mountains, hills and foothills within its territory. The Implementation Plan should also identify priorities for RMC open space in the mountains, hills and foothills, while recognizing the need for the RMC to retain the flexibility to consider other opportunities that may arise.

Implementation Scales

As with the plan itself, implementation must take place at different scales. Although implementation focuses on the project-by-project site-scale work, care must be taken to observe the plan objectives relating to RMC territory as a whole, and patch-corridor network development. The larger scale considerations must be manifested in acquisition decisions and site planning and design.

Implementation Strategies

This section should describe a sequential course of action for the conservation, restoration, creation and connection of RMC habitat, and for the sensitive incorporation of access, recreation, education and other uses and amenities.

Implementation Cost

The RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan may attempt to determine implementation costs. Since the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan will likely take decades to fully implement, an implementation cost section may not be feasible.

Phasing Options

Due to budgetary considerations, especially with regard to planning activity, RMC might need to develop its Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan in phases. The first phase would be the regional inventory and analysis phase. This phase is needed as soon as possible in order to inform RMC work already underway. A Plan could easily be developed at a later date, provided that it is not executed so much later that the inventory and analysis sections are not longer relevant. A Plan Implementation Strategy and Management/Monitoring and Research Plan could also be developed at a later date. However, even in the absence of a Management/Monitoring and Research Plan, monitoring and research should begin as soon as RMC completes its first project in the hills and mountains, to ensure that negative impacts to habitat and wildlife caused by new RMC projects are detected and corrected at the earliest possible time.

Impacts/CEQA/EIR

The RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan may or may not require a CEQA process depending on the contents of the final plan scope that is sent out to bid. As the RMC Staff prepares a Request for Proposal for

the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan, legal council will need to advise on the necessity of CEQA based upon the final plan scope.

Management/Monitoring/Research

As discussed earlier, the RMC Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan should incorporate an Adaptive Management Procedure that will utilize a standardized monitoring plan for all RMC projects. Impacts to habitat, adjacent habitat, and wildlife populations contained in them must be recorded, and analyzed. When negative impacts or insubstantial positive impacts are recorded, either the Plan must be modified, or the site-scale planning process must be modified, or both.

RMC projects should undergo both implementation monitoring and effectiveness monitoring. Implementation monitoring will examine projects to insure that they were developed according to the Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan and the site-scale plan developed for the specific project under review. Effectiveness monitoring will be ongoing and will attempt to determine if the project is helping to achieve RMC goals for the mountains, hills and foothills or whether it is having any negative impacts.

Effectiveness monitoring of RMC projects should consider, at a minimum, changes in plant species and plant communities abundance and composition, changes in plant species and communities abundance and composition, changes in exotic plant species diversity and abundance, evaluation of changes in critical existing and potential habitat areas, changes in habitat patch number, size, configuration, distribution and connectivity, changes in animal species abundance and composition, evaluation of changes in plant wildlife species abundance and composition, mortality sink analysis, evaluation of changes in exotic animal species diversity and abundance, and evaluation of wildlife movement corridors. In the hills and mountains, special care should be taken to monitor impacts to natural systems caused by human use of RMC lands. Lands in the hills and mountains are different than other lands in RMC territory in that projects in the hills and mountains will often focus on conservation of existing functioning habitats, with a relatively minor restoration component. This means natural lands opened to the public by the RMC might actually deteriorate due to human use, harming the natural resources that made the land attractive to the RMC and to the public in the first place.

Because of the quantity of vital information that is currently unavailable, especially information relevant specifically to RMC territory, a Data Gap Identification and Future Research Needs Plan might be a very helpful additional tool to guide ongoing monitoring efforts, and Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan updates. Many information gaps are known, such as the dimensions of wildlife movement corridors that are required by different native wildlife species. Other information gaps should be identified, and a plan for future research should seek to develop this important information.

Funding

RMC may elect to include in its Mountains, Hills and Foothills Plan a section about funding strategies for Plan Implementation. This strategy can also be developed internally by RMC Staff.

Glossary

A glossary of terms used in the Plan will be an invaluable tool for the future audience of the Plan.

■ Future of RMC's Mountains, Hills and Foothills

The RMC should carefully consider the lands located in the mountains, hills and foothills within its territory because most of RMC's habitat and open space are located in these areas. Many of RMC's most significant watershed management, education and recreation opportunities exist in the hills and mountains as well. The RMC must embark upon its conservation and restoration activities as soon as possible, however, as development is rapidly advancing up the natural hillsides that remain. The RMC has a great opportunity to

emerge as the leader in regional open space conservation, through the creation of an objective, scientifically credible plan and consensus-building leadership. The RMC can unite and coordinate the myriad other entities involved with open space conservation and restoration throughout the region and transform the region, realizing a shared vision for the open space and natural resources abundant throughout RMC territory.

D. TRAILS AND BIKE PATHS

Common Ground provided the following direction:

Trails and Bike Paths Plan: To establish a comprehensive network of trails and bike paths, existing plans need to be reviewed to determine whether those plans should be revised to incorporate trails and paths along the river tributaries. Gaps in existing trails and bike paths must be identified and addressed. Potential partners in this effort include: Caltrans, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Orange County Transportation Authority, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department, individual cities and communities, and advocacy groups such as the Los Angeles (and Orange County) Bicycle Coalitions.

The State Conservancies will work with the State Department of Transportation, regional transportation agencies, Councils of Government, cities and local agencies, communities, state and legislators, and community groups, to identify local and regional connections and develop funding strategies for acquisition or development of pedestrian and equestrian trail linkages.

As part of the preparatory work for the Working Group, the consultant team developed the following matrix to assist the Working Group in their consideration of this topic.

Trails and Bike Paths

Agencies: National Park Service River and Trails Division, Caltrans, MTA, OCTA, California State Parks, L.A. and O.C. County Parks

Potential Resource Partners: TBD

Stakeholders: Individual cities and communities, Los Angeles and Orange County Bicycle Coalitions, equestrian groups, trail associations, hiking groups

Conceptual Scope: To establish a comprehensive network of trails and bike paths, existing plans need to be reviewed to determine whether those plans should be revised to incorporate trails and paths along the river tributaries. Gaps in existing trails and bike paths and equestrian trail linkages must be identified and addressed.

Issues: How to identify funding sources recreational bike paths (as most funding for bike paths is intended to create alternative commute modes)?

Is there a single lead agency for trail planning?

The Working Group elected not form a subcommittee on this topic, and instead suggested that other subsequent plans (e.g., River Parkways, Mountains, Hills and Foothills) should address inclusion of trails and bike paths within the scope of those plans.

E. CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Common Ground provided the following direction:

Historic and Cultural Landscape Survey: In order to preserve our rich cultural and agricultural heritage, the RMC, in conjunction with university, professional, civic, and community organizations, State Parks, the National Park Service, and local agencies, will work to create a comprehensive survey of historic and cultural landscapes throughout the watersheds.

To assist the Working Group in their consideration of this topic, the consultant team developed the following matrix, which was provided to the Working Group at their first meeting (on January 30, 2001).

Cultural and Historic Landscapes

Agencies: State Parks, National Park Service, State Historic Preservation Officer and local cultural agencies and commissions

Potential Resource Partners: TBD

Stakeholders: Cities, university, professional, civic, and community organizations

Conceptual Scope: In order to preserve the rich cultural and agricultural heritage of the area, the RMC (with others) will work to create a comprehensive survey of historic and cultural landscapes throughout the watersheds.

Issues: How to identify a lead agency (and resources) for cultural and historic resource identification?

The Working Group elected not form a subcommittee on this topic and did not address specifically address the scope of this proposed subsequent plan. However, as part of their recommendation on Education and Outreach, the Working Group recommended that the RMC encourage development of education and outreach components for all RMC projects (included those funded by the RMC) that would relate the project to the natural and cultural history of the site, and the overall context of the watershed.

F. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Common Ground provided the following direction:

Monitoring and Assessment Plan: The RMC, with partners, will work to develop an assessment process for restoration of the watersheds, and monitor progress towards meeting the goals described herein. Critical to this process will be maintenance and updating of the Geographic Information Systems database developed by the RMC. At a minimum, the periodic assessment process shall occur at ten-year intervals, or more often if deemed practical. This process shall utilize quantifiable methods wherever feasible and input from a technical advisory committee, and shall include stakeholder involvement in the design, implementation, and review of the assessments.

As part of the preparatory work for the Working Group, the consultant team developed the following matrix to assist the Working Group in their consideration of this topic.

Monitoring and Assessment

Agencies: National Park Service River and Trails Division, Caltrans, MTA, OCTA, California State Parks, L.A. and O.C. County Parks

Potential Resource Partners: TBD

Stakeholders: Individual cities and communities, Los Angeles and Orange County Bicycle Coalitions, equestrian groups, trail associations, hiking groups

Conceptual Scope: To establish a comprehensive network of trails and bike paths, existing plans need to be reviewed to determine whether those plans should be revised to incorporate trails and paths along the river tributaries. Gaps in existing trails and bike paths and equestrian trail linkages must be identified and addressed.

Issues: How to identify funding sources recreational bike paths (as most funding for bike paths is intended to create alternative commute modes)?

Is there a single lead agency for trail planning?

The Working Group did not specifically address the scope of this subsequent plan, however it was suggested that monitoring and assessment should be included in the scope of each subsequent plan.

CITY-SPECIFIC APPENDICES

The following cities submitted a City-Specific Appendix to Common Ground.

- Bellflower
- Claremont
- El Monte
- Fullerton
- Glendora
- La Habra
- La Habra Heights
- La Verne
- Pico Rivera
- San Dimas
- San Gabriel
- Santa Fe Springs
- Seal Beach
- Signal Hill
- South Gate

The main body of each City-Specific Appendices follows. Additional supporting information (e.g., maps or other documents) provided by each city are included within the separately-bound appendices to this final report